



Security Council

Distr.: General
28 June 2007

Original: English

Letter dated 28 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 28 June 2007 addressed to you from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Margaret Beckett, and the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Condoleezza Rice (see annex). That letter informs the Security Council of the steps that have been taken to ensure Iraq's compliance with its disarmament obligations under Council resolution 1483 (2003).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Zalmay **Khalilzad**



**Annex to the letter dated 28 June 2007 from the
Permanent Representative of the United States of America
to the United Nations addressed to the President of the
Security Council**

The United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland wish to inform the Security Council of the steps that have been taken with regard to ensuring Iraqi compliance with its disarmament obligations, as called for in Council resolution 1483 (2003).

Together with the Government of Iraq and other Member States, the United States and the United Kingdom, pursuant to the letter dated 8 May 2003 from their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/538), have been working since March 2003 with the objective of locating and securing, removing, disabling, rendering harmless, eliminating or destroying weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles and related delivery systems and programmes in Iraq developed under the regime of Saddam Hussein.

We wish to inform the Security Council that all appropriate steps have been taken to secure, remove, disable, render harmless, eliminate or destroy (a) all of Iraq's known weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles with a range of greater than 150 kilometres and (b) all known elements of Iraq's programmes established to research, develop, design, manufacture, produce, support, assemble and employ such weapons and delivery systems, subsystems and components thereof.

Furthermore, we wish to draw the attention of the Security Council to the conclusions of the report issued by the Special Advisor to the United States Director of Central Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction ("the Duelfer Report") following a review of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes, undertaken by drawing upon information received from former Iraqi officials, other Iraqi citizens, suspected weapon sites and both technical and procurement-related documents. In the course of their investigation, Iraq Survey Group analysts visited suspected weapons-related sites and searched through documents. The report and its addenda are available from the following website: https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd_2004/index.html.

The letter dated 24 April 2007 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/236, annex) outlines additional actions that Iraq has taken and other actions that it intends to take in the near future to demonstrate and affirm to the international community its belief that it is now in full compliance with its disarmament obligations under the relevant Council resolutions.

(Signed) Condoleezza **Rice**
Secretary of State
United States of America

Signed 27 June 2007

(Signed) Margaret **Beckett**
Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Signed 22 June 2007



Security Council

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English
Original: French

Draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions and the statements of its President relating to the situation in Côte d'Ivoire,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and unity of Côte d'Ivoire, and recalling the importance of the principles of good-neighbourliness, non-interference and regional cooperation,

Reaffirming its support to the impartial forces, namely the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and the French forces which support it,

Recalling its endorsement of the political Agreement signed on 4 March 2007 in Ouagadougou by President Laurent Gbagbo and Mr. Guillaume Soro under the facilitation of the Chairperson of the Economic Community of West African States, President Blaise Compaoré,

Reaffirming its readiness to take further steps, in the light of the progress achieved, in order to help the parties in implementing their commitments and to support the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular the electoral process,

Having taken note of the report of the Secretary-General dated 14 May 2007 (S/2007/275),

Determining that the situation in Côte d'Ivoire continues to pose a threat to international peace and security in the region,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* that the mandate of UNOCI and of the French forces which support it shall be extended until 16 July 2007;
 2. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.
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**Security Council**

Distr.: General
28 June 2007

Original: English

**United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and
United States of America: draft resolution**

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous relevant resolutions, including resolutions 661 (1990) of 6 August 1990, 687 (1991) of 3 April 1991, 699 (1991) of 17 June 1991, 707 (1991) of 15 August 1991, 715 (1991) of 11 October 1991, 1051 (1996) of 27 March 1996, 1284 (1999) of 17 December 1999, 1441 (2002) of 8 November 2002, 1483 (2003) of 22 May 2003, 1540 (2004) of 28 April 2004 and 1546 (2004) of 8 June 2004,

Expressing gratitude to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for their important and comprehensive contributions under the relevant resolutions, *noting* the accumulation of expertise, experience and maintenance of a roster of experts during UNMOVIC's mandate, and *encouraging* Member States to maintain similar expertise for the future,

Acknowledging that a democratically elected and constitutionally based Government of Iraq is now in place, *noting* the Government of Iraq's declaration of support for the international non-proliferation regime, and *welcoming* the concrete steps taken in this regard, including the commitment enshrined in the Permanent Constitution and the establishment of the National Monitoring Directorate with responsibility for import/export control,

Recalling Iraq's disarmament obligations under relevant resolutions, its obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, its IAEA Safeguards Agreement, The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction and the Geneva Protocol, *noting* Iraq's commitment to detect, deter, prevent and combat, including through international cooperation when necessary, the illicit trafficking and brokering in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery and related materials, in accordance with its legal authorities and legislation and consistent with international law, and *urging* its adherence to all applicable disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, notably the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, and an Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreement,



Noting disarmament efforts regarding Iraq since 1991, and *further noting* the joint US-UK letter dated 28 June 2007 and the Government of Iraq letter to the Security Council dated 8 April 2007 annexed to this resolution,

Recognizing that the continued operations of UNMOVIC and the IAEA's Iraq Nuclear Verification Office (INVO) are no longer necessary to verify Iraqi compliance with its obligations under the relevant resolutions,

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations,

1. *Decides* to terminate immediately the mandates of UNMOVIC and the IAEA under the relevant resolutions;

2. *Reaffirms* Iraq's disarmament obligations under relevant resolutions, *acknowledges* Iraq's constitutional commitment to the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production and non-use of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and associated equipment, material, and technologies for use in the development, manufacture, production and use of such weapons, as well as delivery systems, and *urges* Iraq to continue to implement this commitment and to adhere to all applicable disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and related international agreements;

3. *Invites* the Government of Iraq to report to the Security Council within one year on progress made in adhering to all applicable disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and related international agreements, notably the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons, an Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement, and on progress made by the National Monitoring Directorate and the Government of Iraq with regard to dual-use controls and harmonizing Iraqi export legislation with international standards;

4. *Takes note* of the summary briefings provided by UNMOVIC/UNSCOM and IAEA on their respective activities in Iraq since 1991, and *expresses* appreciation for their dedicated work;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to provide for the appropriate disposition of UNMOVIC's archives and other property under arrangements ensuring, in particular, that sensitive proliferation information or information provided in confidence by Member States is kept under strict control, and *further requests* that the Secretary-General inform the Security Council within three months on steps taken in this regard;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transfer to the Government of Iraq through the Development Fund for Iraq not later than three months from the date of this resolution, all remaining unencumbered funds in the account established pursuant to paragraph 8 (e) of resolution 986 (1995), after returning to Member States at their request contributions made by them pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 699 (1991);

7. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

Annex I

Letter from the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Secretary of State of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

The United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland wish to inform the Security Council of the steps that have been taken with regard to ensuring Iraqi compliance with its disarmament obligations, as called for in Council resolution 1483 (2003).

Together with the Government of Iraq and other Member States, the United States and the United Kingdom, pursuant to the letter dated 8 May 2003 from their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2003/538), have been working since March 2003 with the objective of locating and securing, removing, disabling, rendering harmless, eliminating or destroying weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles and related delivery systems and programmes in Iraq developed under the regime of Saddam Hussein.

We wish to inform the Security Council that all appropriate steps have been taken to secure, remove, disable, render harmless, eliminate or destroy (a) all of Iraq's known weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles with a range of greater than 150 kilometres and (b) all known elements of Iraq's programmes established to research, develop, design, manufacture, produce, support, assemble and employ such weapons and delivery systems, subsystems and components thereof.

Furthermore, we wish to draw the attention of the Security Council to the conclusions of the report issued by the Special Advisor to the United States Director of Central Intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction ("the Duelfer Report") following a review of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes, undertaken by drawing upon information received from former Iraqi officials, other Iraqi citizens, suspected weapon sites and both technical and procurement-related documents. In the course of their investigation, Iraq Survey Group analysts visited suspected weapons-related sites and searched through documents. The report and its addenda are available from the following website: https://www.cia.gov/library/reports/general-reports-1/iraq_wmd_2004/index.html.

The letter dated 24 April 2007 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/236, annex) outlines additional actions that Iraq has taken and other actions that it intends to take in the near future to demonstrate and affirm to the international community its belief that it is now in full compliance with its disarmament obligations under the relevant Council resolutions.

(Signed) Condoleezza **Rice**
Secretary of State
United States of America

Signed 27 June 2007

(Signed) Margaret **Beckett**
Secretary of State for
Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Signed 22 June 2007

Annex II**Letter dated 8 April 2007 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council**

[Original: Arabic]

I have the honour to address the present letter to you, and through you to the other members of the Security Council, requesting, on behalf of the Government of Iraq, that the Council consider terminating the mandates of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the Iraq Action Team of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) established by the Security Council resolutions on the elimination and removal of former Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, as there are no longer any legal or technical grounds for continuing their mandate and we are certain that Iraq currently has none of the programmes or weapons in question. In this connection, please note the following:

1. Today Iraq has a democratically elected Government and a new Parliament in addition to a Constitution that has been approved by the Iraqis. Today it declares that it is joining the global democratic community in its support for the international non-proliferation regime.

2. Article 9 (e) of the Permanent Constitution of the Government of Iraq states that: "The Iraqi Government shall respect and implement Iraq's international obligations regarding the non-proliferation, non-development, non-production and non-utilization of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and shall prohibit associated equipment, materiel, technologies and communication systems for use in the development, manufacture, production and utilization of such weapons". This Constitution was approved by the Iraqi people in the national referendum held in 2005.

3. As Security Council members know, the Iraqi Government has cooperated fully with the Iraq Survey Group (ISG) in respect of the former regime's weapons programme.

4. Today the Iraqi Government affirms its full commitment to the relevant Security Council resolutions and, in that connection, reiterates the request that it made to the President of the Council in March 2005, as well as the letter from the Iraqi Prime Minister of 11 November 2006 calling for the termination of the mandates of UNMOVIC and the IAEA Iraq Action Team.

5. The Iraqi Government reiterates its commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Biological Weapons Convention and the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. The provisional Iraqi Government announced previously in July 2004 its commitment to all the agreements and conventions on the prevention of proliferation. The Iraqi technical authorities have elaborated a draft law on Iraq's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which is currently before the Parliament — the country's legislative branch — with a view to its adoption and preparations are under way for

accession to the Model Additional Protocol of the International Atomic Energy Agency's safeguards regime.

6. With regard to coordination with IAEA on a code of conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources in Iraq, Iraq has set up an agency responsible for identifying radioactive sources in Iraq and guaranteeing their security, namely, the Iraqi Radioactive Sources Regulatory Authority. Since the fall of the previous regime, IAEA has made four successful verification visits to the Tuwaitha site — in June 2003, August 2004, September 2005 and, most recently, in November 2006.

7. The Iraqi National Monitoring Directorate is overseeing the transfer of dual-use substances and is now making every effort to harmonize Iraqi export legislation with international standards. Iraq has submitted its national report in accordance with its obligations under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

8. The Iraqi Government has undertaken to guarantee the security of its borders by strengthening controls in cooperation with the multinational force.

The Government and people of my country hope that the Security Council will make a serious and objective assessment of the situation in Iraq — namely, the absence of weapons of mass destruction and related programmes — and take the appropriate decision to terminate the mandate of UNMOVIC and the IAEA Iraq Action Team and transfer the balance in the Iraq account opened by the United Nations to the Development Fund for Iraq, for the purposes of investment.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter circulated to the members of the Security Council as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hoshiyar Zebari
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq
8 April 2007

**Security Council**

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Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*Summary*

The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), covers the major developments related to the situation of children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since the previous report on the subject (S/2006/389) and provides information on compliance with and progress made in ending the recruitment and use of children and other grave violations against children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The report notes that, although significant progress has been made through the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations and civil society partners to improve the situation of children affected by armed conflict, major gaps exist, most especially in the Ituri district and North and South Kivu provinces. The failure to arrest those who commit grave violations of children's rights and to heed previous Security Council recommendations for the immediate arrest of Commander Laurent Nkunda and to combat impunity for other violators of children's rights is of deep concern. Although the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in conjunction with United Nations partners and non-governmental organizations, achieved significant progress in the demobilization and reintegration of child combatants, the funding necessary to complete that work in the hardest-hit areas of the eastern region of the country must be made available.

The report also notes the need to address impunity and to redouble efforts to protect children in North Kivu province from recruitment and re-recruitment: much of which is related to the weaknesses of the *mixage* process currently under way. The report also notes the continued recruitment of Congolese refugee and Rwandan children from neighbouring Rwanda for use in armed groups allied to Commander Laurent Nkunda in North Kivu province, and the need for the Government of Rwanda to redouble its efforts to combat this crime. Sexual violence against children remains a serious concern, most especially in the conflict-affected eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The report contains a number of recommendations with a view to securing strengthened action for the protection of war-affected children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



I. Introduction

1. The present report, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), covers the major developments related to the situation of children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since my previous report (S/2006/389). The information used to identify emerging trends and analyse the progress made to redress grave violations of children's rights is based on that collected during monitoring by the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) child protection advisers and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) child protection officers, in conjunction with other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society actors. The report covers the period from June 2006 to May 2007, and focuses mainly on the areas of the country in which armed conflict is still ongoing, notably the Ituri district and the provinces of North and South Kivu. Access to all areas in these provinces for monitoring purposes is still limited.

II. Political, military and social developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

2. On 30 July 2006, the Democratic Republic of the Congo held its historic first presidential and National Assembly elections since independence in 1960. The Provincial Assembly elections were held on 29 October 2006. Two broad alliances emerged in the National Assembly, with the Alliance de la majorité présidentielle (AMP) holding the majority and 160 seats affiliated with the opposition parties Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC) and Union pour la nation.

3. On 6 December, Joseph Kabila was sworn in as President, bringing the transition process enshrined in the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition, signed in Pretoria on 17 December 2002, to its formal conclusion. On 30 December 2006, President Kabila appointed Antoine Gizenga Prime Minister. The provincial assemblies elected the Senate on 19 January 2007. The new Government, with a 60-member cabinet, was announced and began its work on 5 February 2007.

4. While the electoral process was largely peaceful and devoid of major irregularities, some incidents of violence did occur. The run up to the second round of the presidential elections held on 29 October 2006 was marked by tensions and accusations between the two contenders, Joseph Kabila and former Vice-President Jean-Pierre Bemba. Following the announcement of the provisional results of the election on 15 November 2006, Jean-Pierre Bemba appealed to the Supreme Court to review the results. The subsequent violent demonstrations outside the Supreme Court buildings on 21 November forced the Court to suspend its activities. On 27 November, the Court officially declared Joseph Kabila President-elect. Following mediation by the Comité international des sages, former Vice-President Bemba declared his acceptance of the results of the election in the interest of maintaining peace, and pledged to lead a peaceful republican opposition. He was subsequently elected to the Senate in January 2007.

5. On 22 and 23 March in Kinshasa, the security forces, including the Republican Guard, assaulted the members of the Division de la protection personnelle, the security detail of Senator Jean-Pierre Bemba. An unknown but estimated

300 persons, including members of the security forces and civilians, were killed during the intense armed clashes which included the use of heavy weaponry in a densely populated urban area of Kinshasa. On 24 March, the Attorney-General announced his intention to open a legal case charging Senator Bemba with high treason, and subsequently wrote to the Senate, requesting it to lift Senator Bemba's immunity. On 11 April, Senator Bemba was given an approval by the Senate to leave the country to seek medical treatment in Portugal, where he remains at the time of writing.

6. In the lead up to the hostilities in Kinshasa the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) issued a communiqué instructing all security personnel who had been assigned to protection duties under the transitional leadership to present themselves by a 15 March deadline to designated FARDC barracks in connection with the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. My Special Representative, William Lacy Swing, had been urging the Congolese authorities and Senator Bemba to find a peaceful solution to the issue of disarming his security detail. In this connection, the President of the Security Council on 3 April 2007 made a statement on behalf of the Council deploring the violence that occurred in Kinshasa, expressing grave concern at the loss of lives, in particular of civilians, and encouraging the Congolese authorities to respect the rights of the members of the opposition and to undertake the necessary investigations into the events (S/PRST/2007/9).

7. The violence in Bas-Congo province in January 2007 and the clashes in Kinshasa in March indicate a tendency on the part of the authorities to respond to political challenges with a disproportionate use of force. Nevertheless, several positive developments in the National Assembly, including the launching of a parliamentary commission of inquiry into the Bas-Congo incidents, seem to indicate a readiness by the National Assembly to become a constructive force in the country's nascent democracy. The leadership of the National Assembly also played an important role in defusing the tensions prior to the March violence in Kinshasa. The agreement to include members of the opposition in the parliamentary permanent commissions, as well as the election of an opposition figure, Leon Kengo Wa Dondo, as President of the Senate, are further encouraging signs of the democratic process.

8. While Kinshasa and most urban areas are generally calm and peaceful, frequent outbreaks of fighting continue in the east, resulting in civilian casualties and displacement. The security situation in North Kivu is extremely volatile and remains a source of major concern. In North Kivu, fighting broke out in Sake on 25 November between non-integrated brigades loyal to Laurent Nkunda and FARDC. Subsequently, the Government reached an agreement with Nkunda, allowing for the *mixage* (integration) of Nkunda's troops with FARDC units. Instead of breaking Nkunda's command over his troops, the *mixage* process contributed to strengthening his position. The newly established integrated units launched offensive operations against the Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda (FDLR) with disastrous humanitarian consequences, including the displacement of more than 100,000 additional persons.

III. Grave violations of children's rights: incidents and trends

9. During the reporting period, widespread violations of child rights continued to be documented. Members of the Congolese security forces — notably the armed forces and police — continued to be the main perpetrators, responsible for 50 per cent (FARDC) and 19 per cent (Police nationale civile (PNC)) of documented violations of children's rights. These security forces remain in need of continued reform and professionalization, including a change of culture and the enforcement of strict discipline, zero tolerance of abuses against the civilian population and the regular payment of adequate salaries.

10. Armed elements of the remaining Mai-Mai groups, of the militias in Ituri and of foreign armed elements are responsible for the other 30 per cent of reported violations. This indicates the urgent need to proceed to the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of these remaining groups, a process that should be adequately funded and implemented without delay.

Abductions

11. The number of cases of abduction reported in Ituri district and the provinces of North and South Kivu remained high over the past year. Abducted children were recruited in 30 per cent of the cases, raped in 13 per cent and used as forced labour, such as carrying the belongings of armed elements during a redeployment of troops, in 2 per cent. In addition, statistics show that 17 per cent of the reported cases were of children formerly associated with armed groups and detained by FARDC in order to gather information on the groups or to extort money from family members. In 38 per cent of the reported cases, the reasons for the abduction were not known. Perpetrators include FARDC integrated and non-integrated brigades, elements of armed groups in Ituri and elements of FDLR. Reported cases included the following:

(a) In April 2006, Major Mulomba of the FARDC non-integrated 116th Brigade reportedly abducted several children formerly associated with armed groups from a reintegration programme run by a local non-governmental organization in Ihusi (South Kivu). Allegedly, the children were taken to Nyabibwe for training and were subsequently reported to have been sent towards Masisi territory to fight with the troops of Laurent Nkunda in November 2006;

(b) Four girls were abducted and used as "wives" by FARDC soldiers of the integrated 6th Brigade in Bunia (Ituri). Two girls are 13 years old, one is 14 and one 16. One of the girls is pregnant. All of the girls were separated on 29 March 2007 and the Military Prosecutor issued an arrest warrant for the alleged perpetrators;

(c) On 4 October 2006, five girls and several boys (total number unknown) were reportedly abducted from their primary school in the town of Faradje (Province Orientale, near the border with the Sudan). A group of between 30 and 40 armed elements conducting raids throughout the town allegedly carried out the abduction.

Killing and maiming of children

12. A 20 per cent decrease was observed in the number of killing and maiming incidents documented during the reporting period compared to the preceding year.

The reasons for this trend can be attributed in particular to fewer active armed conflicts. Despite this positive trend, children continue to be the victims of attacks and of clashes between FARDC integrated and non-integrated units, armed groups in Ituri, and FDLR in North and South Kivu.

13. On 5 September 2006, a 9-year-old girl was killed during a clash between members of the FARDC integrated 91st Battalion and the non-integrated 83rd Brigade in Rutshuru territory (North Kivu), which is loyal to Laurent Nkunda.

14. On 12 December 2006, in Shonga (Masisi territory, North Kivu), a 14-year-old boy was killed. Reportedly, military elements of the 10th Military Region shot at the house of the boy's father when the latter refused to give them the demobilization allowance he had just received.

15. The killing of at least 32 civilians, including 5 children, was perpetrated by 14 elements of the FARDC integrated 1st Brigade over a period of four months in Ituri district. These summary executions, constituting several incidents, were perpetrated in Bavi between August and November 2006. This noteworthy case was investigated and prosecuted by the Military Prosecutor of Bunia and represents a significant step forward in the fight against impunity. On 19 February 2007, 13 defendants were convicted and given life sentences, and one was sentenced to 180 days. The men were tried and convicted for their participation in the summary executions, rape and looting.

16. On the night of 31 March, five armed men, identified as members of the FDLR Rasta faction (Rwandan Hutu rebels), reportedly attacked Kaji village in Walungu territory (67 km south-west of Bukavu) and abducted nine persons, among whom were seven girls aged between 12 and 17 years. They also allegedly injured four persons, burned a 9-year-old child and killed another child aged 2. Three of the abductees, of whom two were children, returned to the village the following morning. The FDLR Rasta group is reported to have sent a letter to the Chef de groupement of Budodo village on 2 April 2007, threatening that they would return to the Kaniola area and abduct 14 persons, including 2 girls, unless the villagers provided them with bread, milk and money.

Recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups

17. Reports received during the past year indicated that the recruitment of children by armed forces and groups decreased by 8 per cent compared to the previous reporting period. The reasons for the decrease can be attributed to a combination of factors, including the progress made in the implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for children, the army integration process, a constant decrease in the number of active fighting zones, and persistent lobbying by child protection networks against the recruitment of children. Despite this overall trend, the presence of children among FARDC integrated and non-integrated brigades and the militia groups remains high, largely in Ituri district and the two Kivu provinces.

18. Denial of the presence of children among the ranks, active obstruction of the separation of children, and threats made against child protection agents working to separate children have become frequent in Ituri and North Kivu. The worst incident occurred on 26 July 2006, when Alphonse Batibwira, a child protection agent of the local non-governmental organization UPADERI, was killed in Ngungu (North

Kivu). Mr. Batibwira was arrested while conducting advocacy work on the separation of children from armed groups. The alleged perpetrator is Captain Gaston, an officer of the non-integrated 81st Brigade loyal to Laurent Nkunda. Although an investigation was conducted and an arrest warrant issued by General Kisempia on 30 January 2007, Captain Gaston remains at large. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict strongly advocated his immediate arrest during her visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in March 2007.

Ituri district

19. In Ituri, although numbers are lower than in the previous reporting period, recruitment by the Front des nationalistes et intégrationnistes-Front de résistance patriotique en Ituri (FNI-FRPI) continued to be reported. Although 1,000 armed elements reported to the *brassage* centre in Kinsangani (Province Orientale) between March and May 2007, it is estimated that the remaining armed groups in Ituri (FNI-FRPI and Mouvement révolutionnaire congolais (MRC)) still have 3,500 elements that did not surrender. These elements include the children being forced to stay behind until the conditions of amnesty imposed by the commanders are met. Many children associated with these forces are fleeing because of the difficult living conditions. Between 12 and 16 March 2007, at least 10 boys aged between 15 and 17 years escaped from D'doy (Ituri). The boys reported that at least another 50 children ran away from FNI because of the harsh living conditions and lack of food.

20. On 10 and 11 January 2007, 26 children were separated from the MRC group in Bunia. Six of the children arrived at the *brassage* centre in Bunia and mentioned that the others had been left behind by the group prior to its arrival at the centre. Child protection partners identified 20 children in the villages surrounding Bunia.

21. Furthermore, commanders reporting to Peter Karim of FNI actively obstructed the process. Since the beginning of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process on 10 March at the transit centre of Kpandroma, Colonels Desiré and Antoine obstructed the separation of children and stated that, since there were no children among their ranks, there was no need for the child protection partners to be there. Colonel Antoine specifically threatened the Child Protection Adviser of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

Rwanda and Uganda: recruitment of children deployed in North Kivu province

22. Since January 2007, a surge in the recruitment and use of Congolese and Rwandan children by commanders loyal to Laurent Nkunda has been observed in North Kivu. As at 31 May 2007, 11 Congolese children recruited in the refugee camps in Rwanda and 16 Rwandan children (13 recruited in Rwanda and 3 recruited in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) had been separated from the FARDC mixed brigades. Interviewed children stated they were recruited by men in civilian clothing who promised them civilian jobs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Congolese children mentioned that they accepted the offer owing to the present lack of opportunities (education, vocational training, employment etc.) in the refugee camps. Once identified and released, Congolese children are reunited with their families in the refugee camps in Rwanda by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Rwandan children are repatriated

through the MONUC disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and resettlement or repatriation programme, which hands them over to the national Rwandan disarmament, demobilization and reintegration authorities. Nevertheless, in one instance, a 17-year-old Rwandan child, who was formerly associated with Laurent Nkunda's forces and had been repatriated to Rwanda at the end of March 2007, reported that, on his arrival in Rwanda, he was taken to a military camp in Gisenyi instead of being transferred into the national Rwandan disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for children. He reported having been interrogated, accused of being an FDLR agent and having suffered ill-treatment. Once released, he was rearrested twice and, when able to escape from police custody towards the end of April, managed to find his way back to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the transit and orientation centre at which he had been receiving care.

23. Reports indicate that recruitment activities were carried out in North Kivu, Rwanda and Uganda immediately prior to and throughout the *mixage* process. This surge appears to be linked to the strategy of commanders loyal to Laurent Nkunda to increase the number of troops to be mixed and to increase the strength of forces prior to engaging in combat operations against FDLR and the Mai-Mai in North Kivu. Children who escaped or were separated indicated that recruitment was actively ongoing in the returnee settlements of Buhambwe, Masisi territory, the Kiziba and Byumba refugee camps in Rwanda, in the towns of Byumba and Mutura in Rwanda and in the town of Bunagana on the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda. On 5 February 2007, two boys who escaped from the forces of Colonel Makenga (Commander of the FARDC mixed Bravo Brigade) mentioned that they had been recruited together with nine other children and 17 adults on 18 January 2007 in the Kibuye refugee camp in Rwanda. In addition, the boys reported that, since July 2006, a group known as the Association des jeunes réfugiés congolais, reportedly linked to Laurent Nkunda, had been actively recruiting Congolese ethnic Tutsi children and young people in the Kibuye camp.

24. On 9 February, a 16-year-old boy from Uganda stated that he had been forcibly recruited in Bunagana (on the border between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda) on 29 January 2007. He was reportedly recruited, along with five other Ugandan children, by Adjutant chef "Eric" and Major Janvier, who operates under the command of Colonel Saddam (of the 836th Battalion, loyal to Laurent Nkunda). Following his recruitment, the boy, together with other newly recruited children (20, according to the boy) and 100 adult armed men were taken to Mushake for the *mixage* of the FARDC Charlie Brigade.

25. Interviews were held with 16 children who had escaped from the FARDC mixed brigades and FDLR and were reportedly recruited in Congolese refugee camps in Rwanda. During the interviews, the children said that they had been recruited by civilians, in some cases promised employment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, had undergone military training and been forced into active combat. On 12 March, two boys (aged 16 and 17 years) reported to the child protection adviser in Goma after having been recruited on separate occasions from the Byumba refugee camp in Rwanda on 17 January 2007. According to the children, they had been promised temporary employment by two men dressed in civilian clothes. Eventually, they had been issued military uniforms and led to Tchengero, where they had passed through the *mixage* process and been issued with FARDC identification cards. After one week, the children had decided to

escape to Goma. The children had then been apprehended by FARDC troops at Kibumba, detained for one night and severely beaten. The following day they had been transferred to the T2 detention cell in Goma, where they had reportedly also been beaten by other inmates before being separated from the adults.

26. Children recruited are being used in active fighting between FDLR and the FARDC mixed brigades. A 15-year-old Rwandan boy escaped from FDLR on 19 March 2007, after fighting against the FARDC mixed Bravo Brigade in Rutshuru territory early in March 2007. According to the boy, there were five other children in his group. He also reported that large numbers of children were present among the members of the mixed FARDC Bravo Brigade.

27. After recruitment, children often reported undergoing military training prior to deployment with the forces. On 23 March, a 16-year-old boy attested to having received one week of military training prior to deployment in Kitchanga with the 83rd Brigade loyal to Laurent Nkunda; on 15 March, another 16-year-old boy mentioned that he had received training over three and a half months.

Armed groups in North Kivu province

28. Colonel Sultani Makenga, Commander of the FARDC mixed Bravo Brigade, has been systematically obstructing the release of children and threatening child protection agents throughout the *mixage* process. On 22 March, at the *mixage* centre of Kitchanga in Masisi territory (North Kivu), as the child protection team was preparing to leave the site with eight separated children, Colonel Makenga of Bravo Brigade (deployed in Rutshuru territory) forcibly pulled six of the eight children out of the car and violently threatened the three child protection staff. Two of the children refused to leave the car and were taken to a local transit centre. Three of the children were subsequently released while the other three remain associated with Bravo Brigade.

29. Large numbers of children are reportedly being hidden by their commanders in Masisi territory in North Kivu, in particular in Kabati, Kiroliirwe and the Tebero region. Throughout the *mixage* process, children have been hidden by the commanders and prevented from going to *mixage* sites to avoid their separation by child protection agents. Some of the children interviewed mentioned that orders to hide them came directly from Laurent Nkunda and from Lt. Colonel Ngaruye Baudoin (of the 81st Brigade). Children are given various reasons for being hidden; sometimes they are told that their services are still required, or that they are considered to be private property. In some instances, commanders reportedly cited the capture and trial of Thomas Lubanga by the International Criminal Court as reasons for not taking them to the *mixage* centres. When children are brought along with the adults to the *mixage* centres they are often forced to declare an age above 18 years.

30. On 11 March, two 16-year-old boys escaped from forces of the combined 81st and 83rd Brigades and reported that they had been among a group of 39 children ordered by Colonel Baudoin to stay hidden during the *mixage* of Echo Brigade at Kimoka (North Kivu), and had been subsequently taken to the 83rd Brigade position at Kabati. They reported that 27 children were still in hiding at Kabati and that many more children remained among the 83rd Brigade forces.

31. Children formerly associated with armed forces regularly report suffering harassment and threats by FARDC elements. Documented cases include children being abducted, held in detention centres and beaten in order to obtain information on the groups with which they were associated. In addition, a ransom is usually extorted from families who seek to collect their children at mixage centres or military camps.

32. On 17 March 2007, in Mabuku (North Kivu), an FARDC Lieutenant of the 23rd Battalion, integrated 2nd Brigade, arrested five children together with two adults and accused them of supporting a local Mai-Mai group. The five children were released after a payment of \$15 each from their families.

33. On 13 May 2007, the FARDC integrated 2nd Brigade arrested an 11-year-old boy in Beni (North Kivu), who claimed to be Mai-Mai "General" Baraka. The boy appeared to have a thorough knowledge of the Mai-Mai armed group operating in the Virundo area of North Kivu. However, his identity has yet to be confirmed. The boy stated that 100 more children were still present in the Mai-Mai groups he commanded and expressed the wish that he and the other children be separated from the group that he allegedly commanded, be protected and go to school. The boy is currently being cared for by child protection partners, which are working to verify his identity.

Armed groups in South Kivu and Katanga province

34. In South Kivu, an overall reduction in recruitment was observed. However, cases of recruitment continued to be reported in Bunyakiri, Kalehe and the Ruzizi plain as a result of FARDC negotiations with commanders of dissident groups, who seek to present a high number of elements so as to obtain a higher rank and greater financial benefits. In September 2006, reports indicated that child recruitment activities in Ihusi and military training in Mukwidja were carried out by Captain Apollinaire, allegedly in preparation for the fighting in Sake (North Kivu). On 23 and 28 November 2006, child protection agents separated 107 children, aged between 14 and 17 years, who had been reportedly recently recruited by Major Abdou Panda in anticipation of his integration into the army.

35. In addition, the presence of at least 25 children, including girls, among the ranks of the FARDC integrated 3rd and 8th Brigades has been documented. Children interviewed mentioned that they had been compelled by their commanders to declare themselves to be over 18 years of age while undergoing *brassage* in 2004 and 2005. Since December 2006, children in the integrated 3rd Brigade escaped or discreetly approached child protection partners to request assistance for their release.

36. On 12 December 2006, the case of a 17-year-old boy who escaped from the integrated 3rd Brigade was documented. The child mentioned that at least 25 minors were compelled by their commanders to state that they were over 18 years of age during the Structure for Military Integration (SMI) registration exercise carried out in November 2005.

37. On 14 February 2007, a 17-year-old girl associated with the integrated 3rd Brigade in Bukavu (South Kivu) requested the intervention of child protection partners to facilitate her release from the Brigade. The girl was eventually released and reunited with her family on 1 May 2007.

38. On 17 March 2007, Mai-Mai Colonel Mabolongo, known as Colonel 106, refused to release a 4-month-old child to his 16-year-old mother, who had been separated from his group. According to the girl, she had been abducted in July 2005 at the age of 14 years and served with Colonel 106 for two years. In February 2006, the Colonel raped her and she subsequently gave birth to the boy in October 2006. On 16 February 2007, after identifying herself as a girl associated with an armed group during the SMI disarmament process, Colonel 106 took her son away and has since refused to give him back to her. The baby was eventually reunited with the mother on 21 March, after intense advocacy and the intervention of representatives of the FARDC 10th Military Region.

39. In northern Katanga province, following the disarmament of most Mai-Mai groups, no incidents of child recruitment were reported. Nonetheless, children are still present, together with their families, in the Mai-Mai group led by Mulundi Delphin (the Rahiya Mutumboki) in Kongolo and Nyunzu. While this group has indicated on several occasions its willingness to surrender, incidents of harassment of the local population continue to be reported. This group is not eligible for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration through the national plan.

Grave incidents of sexual violence

40. Despite all of the initiatives undertaken to counter sexual violence and the adoption of two national laws on sexual violence on 20 July 2006, the number of sexual abuses remains extremely high. Sexual violence has occurred virtually unabated, in a climate of impunity and judicial dysfunction. Although the reported rate of sexual violence remains high, such incidents are underreported and accurate statistics are difficult to obtain because of a number of factors, including the fear of ostracism and retribution which prevents survivors from coming forward; the prohibitive distance and lack of access to medical care owing to the prevailing security situation in some areas; a lack of faith in the judicial system; and the local tendency of amicable settlement, whereby the perpetrator pays the victim an agreed-upon sum or value in kind. During the period covered by the present report, 12,867 survivors of sexual violence were identified by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) partners in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Of those survivors, 4,222 were children (3,740 girls and 482 boys). Children represent an alarming 33 per cent of survivors of sexual violence. Of 100 survivors in Ituri, 43 were children (of whom approximately 18 per cent were boys). Of the aforementioned 4,222 children, information on the perpetrators is available in only 690 cases; in 29 cases, the perpetrators were members of FARDC or PNC (4.2 per cent); in 458 cases, they were from armed groups (66 per cent); and in 203 cases, they were civilians (29 per cent).

41. On 3 November 2006, a 12-year-old girl was reportedly raped by two armed elements in Sumbusu, Djugu territory (Ituri). While the two armed elements could not be identified, it should be noted that a high number of armed elements reporting to Peter Karim of FNI are based in that area.

42. In September 2006, a human rights team concluded the investigation in Kibirizi (North Kivu) and found evidence that rape was used as a weapon of war during the Rutshuru crisis of January 2006, when between 40 and 90 women and girls were sexually assaulted by soldiers of the 83rd Brigade loyal to Laurent Nkunda.

43. In South Kivu, the main perpetrators include elements of FARDC and the Police, as well as armed elements of FDLR. During the reporting period, the Panzi Hospital in Bukavu registered 150 cases in which the victims were minors. On 23 March, a rape was reportedly committed on a 13-year-old girl by an element of the FARDC integrated 11th Brigade based in Walungu (South Kivu). The soldier, known as Junior, serves as an escort to Major Samson who is based in Butuza. The alleged perpetrator has been arrested and is currently detained in Walungu pending his transfer to Bukavu.

44. On 17 June 2006, a 16-year-old girl was reportedly abducted by armed FDLR elements from her home in Walungu territory (South Kivu). The girl mentioned that, following her abduction, she was taken to the forests where she reportedly spent eight months, during which she suffered inhuman and degrading treatment, beatings and repeated rapes until she escaped. According to the girl, approximately 19 other females, including minors, were being held by the armed group and remained behind. The rape of a four-and-a-half-year-old girl in Kalehe territory (South Kivu) was also documented. The rape was reportedly perpetrated by armed FDLR elements.

45. Early in October 2006, one boy and one girl aged 15 years were abducted by members of FDLR (Chombi group, reporting to Jean-Marie Kiombe) from Mbogwe and Mule villages (South Kivu). The children were held for three weeks, together with adults. During this time, the children were beaten and the girl was raped along with nine other women.

46. A 14-year-old girl mentioned that she had been abducted from her home in Kangala (South Kivu) by FDLR elements on the night of 28 February 2007. The girl reported that she was abducted along with 10 other villagers, including 4 children, and raped by three men. The abductees were released after a ransom was paid.

47. Impunity for the crime of sexual violence is the norm and contributes to the widespread nature of sexual violence. The cases in which the perpetrators are arrested are very few, and fewer still are those in which the perpetrators are actually prosecuted and convicted. In many cases, perpetrators who are arrested often escape in dubious circumstances or because correctional facilities are not adequate. For example, Sergeant Bunganda of the FARDC integrated 2nd Brigade, the alleged rapist of two 13-year-old girls, was arrested on 4 March following a demonstration by the inhabitants of Butuhe village (North Kivu), in which the rape took place. The alleged perpetrator was able to escape on 7 March and, only after the intervention of child protection agents, was the FARDC element responsible for guarding the detention cells arrested. The guard confessed his negligence in the case but was subsequently released upon the rearrest of the alleged perpetrator on 5 May 2007, whose trial is ongoing.

48. On 25 January 2007, a 14-year-old girl was reportedly abducted and raped in Zaa (approximately 40 km from Mahagi, Ituri) by FARDC element Mangbau of the integrated 1st Brigade, 2nd Battalion. The parents of the girl had gone several times to the FARDC camp of Nyankambi where she was held, but the soldier regularly refused to release the young girl, indicating that he was willing to pay a dowry in order to marry her. The girl was able to escape on 6 March 2007 and is back with her family, which has filed a complaint with the Military Prosecutor. The alleged perpetrator was arrested 9 March 2007 and an investigation is under way.

49. In only a few instances are perpetrators prosecuted and convicted for the crimes committed. In June 2007, two FARDC soldiers in Uvira were convicted by the Tribunal militaire de garnison of Bukavu of the rape of two minors: Lieutenant Deny Byashwira, of the non-integrated 122nd Brigade, was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment and payment of the equivalent of US\$ 15,000 in damages for the rape of an 11-year-old girl on 24 February 2007 in Mwenga (130 km north Bukavu, South Kivu). Corporal Kasongo Akuza, also of the non-integrated 122nd Brigade, was condemned to eight years' imprisonment and payment of the equivalent of US\$ 10,000 in damages for the rape of an 11-year-old girl on 7 March 2007 in Bionga (60 km from Mwenga, South Kivu).

Attacks on schools and hospitals

50. While no reports of attacks against schools and hospitals were received, a trend of schools being occupied by armed forces and groups was observed in Ituri and North Kivu.

51. The Virunga Institute and the Karamba Primary School in Jomba (Rutshuru territory, North Kivu) are reportedly occupied by troops under the command of Laurent Nkunda. Also in Jomba, the Nyakakiza Primary School is reportedly occupied by FARDC.

52. In January 2007, the elementary school of Laudjo (Ituri) was occupied by FARDC elements reportedly belonging to the integrated 6th Brigade. Following the fighting incidents with FNI and the displacement of the civilian population of the village, the FARDC elements reportedly occupied the school for one week, during which they destroyed all of the school's furniture and used it as wood fuel for heating.

Denial of humanitarian access

53. Overall, the capacity of humanitarian actors to access and provide assistance to the civilian populations in need has increased during the reporting period. While no situations of denial of humanitarian assistance were reported, access to certain areas in North and South Kivu and Ituri remains limited, particularly during FARDC military operations against the armed groups still operating in those regions.

IV. Dialogue and action plans

A. National action plan on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of children

54. The national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme had precise and clear provision for the release of children. The operational framework for the release of children (Cadre opérationnel pour les enfants associés aux forces et groupes armés) was launched in May 2004 and, during the period from mid-2003 to December 2006, approximately 30,000 children were released from armed forces and groups, including those released prior to the adoption of the operational framework. The delays in the implementation of the national programme and the stalling of the *brassage* process seriously affected the release of children by Congolese authorities. One of the consequences of those delays was that child

protection partners were obliged to negotiate directly with FARDC non-integrated forces, as had been the practice prior to the official disarmament, demobilization and reintegration/*brassage* process.

55. In the second half of 2006, the deployment of joint mobile teams (in which FARDC, SMI and the Commission Nationale de Désarmement, Démobilisation et Réinsertion (CONADER)) participated to identify troops eligible to undergo *brassage* in the field, provided another opportunity to gain official access to the children in FARDC non-integrated forces. As an exceptional measure, UNICEF supported the inclusion of 12 verifying agents in six mobile teams in North and South Kivu, who managed to separate 440 children (302 in North Kivu and 138 in South Kivu) during November and December 2006.

56. In North Kivu, the *mixage* process was undertaken as a strictly military pre-*brassage* process that did not include any provisions in regard to the demobilization of combatants and the separation of children. With strong advocacy, MONUC child protection advisers and UNICEF officers gained access to the *mixage* process and created a space within which children could be identified, although they were prevented from separating children. It took three phases of *mixage*, extensive lobbying at the provincial and national levels, including an exchange of letters between the MONUC Force Commander and the FARDC Commander, General Kisempia, and the identification of 223 potential children among the ranks of the first three newly mixed brigades (now officially part of FARDC) before child protection partners were allowed to begin the process of verifying and separating children. Since the beginning of the *mixage* process, child protection partners have separated 154 children. As at 31 May 2007, 200 children remained in hiding among the forces loyal to Laurent Nkunda.

57. A total of 3,913 children, including 259 girls, were separated in northern Ituri and South Kivu during the period covered by the present report. In Ituri, 2,004 children were separated, including 193 girls; in North Kivu, 1,439 children, including 13 girls; and in South Kivu, 470 children, including 53 girls.

58. In Katanga, following the surrender on 12 May 2006 of Mai-Mai leader Kyungu Mutanga, known as Gédéon, 183 children were separated from his group. Since the end of May 2006, Gédéon has been living in the FARDC Officers' Mess in Lubumbashi where he has been keeping three children aged 12, 14 and 17 years, whom he considers his "spiritual guardians". After almost one year of advocacy, the 12-year-old and 14-year-old boys were separated and reunited with their families on 29 March and 30 April 2007, respectively. A local non-governmental organization is conducting family tracing for the other boy. On 19 May 2006, an arrest warrant against Gédéon was issued for insurrection, crimes against humanity and attempted murder. The warrant has not yet been executed but a preliminary hearing was held on 5 June 2007, during which the prosecutor extended the arrest warrant for one month and set the next hearing for 5 July.

59. In April 2007, 201 children were released from the Division de protection présidentielle units of Senator Jean-Pierre Bemba in Equateur province. Members of the Division have now agreed to enter the *brassage* process and, at the time of writing, the children were being cared for by host families while awaiting family tracing and reunification.

B. Dialogue with parties to conflict and other action plans

60. Pursuant to the recommendation contained in my previous report (S/2006/389, para. 62), my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, undertook a field mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo from 4 to 10 March 2007. The objective of the mission was to ascertain first-hand the progress made in regard to the recommendations of the Security Council emanating from its consideration of the aforementioned report. During her visit, Ms. Coomaraswamy met with governmental and military authorities to convey the Council's concerns with regard to the recruitment of children, sexual violence against girls and impunity. Ms. Coomaraswamy's advocacy messages focused on three main issues: an end to all child recruitment and use; ensuring the immediate release of children and the provision of reintegration support; ensuring that military leaders who recruit children are prosecuted and held accountable; and taking immediate measures to end sexual violence against girls and prosecute those responsible.

61. In collaboration with non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, UNICEF officers and MONUC child protection advisers continue to conduct advocacy activities, both directly with authorities and through participation in the protection cluster mechanism (at both the provincial and national levels) chaired by UNHCR. Advocacy activities were undertaken throughout the reporting period for the release of children associated with armed forces and of those arbitrarily arrested by the police.

V. Follow-up and programmatic responses to violations

General capacity-building of the judicial sector

62. In addition to the training provided to military prosecutors, the ongoing advocacy and support provided to military prosecutors investigating abuses and grave violations of children's rights have led to the development of a project aimed at providing technical support to facilitate investigations and bring about justice in respect of crimes committed against children by the military and police. It is hoped that this project will be supported by donors in the immediate future. Of particular significance would be the imposition of penalties in respect of child recruitment, which would reinforce Article 190 of the Constitution. The current draft of the child protection code provides that enlisting or using persons aged less than 18 years by armed forces and groups and the police would be punishable by a sentence of between 10 and 20 years.

63. Child protection partners have continued working with local child protection networks to reinforce and further develop the monitoring and reporting mechanism and to strengthen the advocacy capacity of local partners.

Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of children

64. The lack of funding for the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has resulted in the withdrawal of several key actors in the field and has contributed to the creation of important gaps in programming of child disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. For instance, the International Rescue Committee and CARE had to close their programmes in Ituri and Maniema,

respectively, owing to lack of funds. UNICEF has attempted to address these gaps by increasing its funding for reintegration projects in addition to supporting all other phases of the child disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. At the time of writing, more than 22 implementing partners were being funded in the eastern part of the country, including CONADER. During the period covered by the present report, 3,913 children, including 259 girls, passed through transitory care structures supported by UNICEF in Ituri and North and South Kivu prior to being reunited with their families.

65. According to CONADER figures, of the 29,291 children released from armed forces and groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the period from mid-2003 to December 2006, approximately 15,167 (slightly more than 50 per cent) have so far received some form of reintegration assistance. Among those beneficiaries, 6,066 have received support to return to school, and 9,101 have been enrolled in livelihood support programmes.

66. Several constraints remain to be addressed in regard to child disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programming:

(a) As mentioned above, the stalling of the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has impeded efforts to separate children from armed forces and groups. With the closure of orientation centres in mid-2006, the systems that had been established to rapidly process large numbers of children were dismantled. Increasingly, official provisions regarding the release of children, as set out in the CONADER Cadre operationnel, are now negotiated directly and on an ad hoc basis with each of the surrendering commanders, including FARDC non-integrated forces in the field and militia groups;

(b) The poor cooperation and commitment received from some military officers and certain local civilian authorities (e.g., Police) continues to constitute an important constraint in the process of separation of children. The attitude and behaviour of commanders who publicly threaten child protection actors with no fear of punishment demonstrate the gravity of the situation. The above-mentioned incidents of harassment and intimidation of child protection advisers and child protection partners that occurred during the *mixage* process in North Kivu and the disarmament of FNI elements in Ituri are clear examples. Furthermore, the staggeringly low number of child recruitment cases that are prosecuted and the escape of the sentenced commanders (e.g., Jean-Pierre Biyoyo) are discouraging. The continued recruitment and re-recruitment of children with impunity over the course of the reporting period, during which a national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme was ongoing, is an affront to national authorities;

(c) Child protection agencies also noted the increased resistance of commanders to identifying children for release during disarmament or the *brassage* process. In some cases, this may be related to the desire of commanders to maintain their troop numbers at a level as high as possible in the hope of receiving a higher rank in FARDC. In others, it is thought that commanders abandon children en route to disarmament sites for fear of prosecution;

(d) In certain areas, the prevailing insecurity, arising from inter-ethnic conflict and the ongoing presence of various armed groups who commit human rights violations, greatly hampers the capacity of child protection actors to implement certain aspects of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

programme, such as family reunification and reintegration. For example, in November 2006, a slowdown of the family reunification process, a lack of adequate security in areas of return and the protracted presence of children in transit and orientation centres, in some cases for more than 10 months, were observed in the areas of Nyanzale, Kibabi and Tongo (North Kivu);

(e) The number of girls released from armed forces and groups through the official processes remains low. In addition to a lack of awareness among commanders of their obligations to release girls who are used as “wives”, the low number is also due to a perceived lack of choice by girls who see no better option than to remain with their military “husbands”, their fear of ostracism by the community upon return, and a lack of awareness by the girls of their rights. Large numbers of girls who escape from armed forces and groups on their own, without going through the official processes, are emerging. These girls often try to discreetly return to civilian life despite the enormous health, economic and social problems that they may face. However, their lack of official certification means that they cannot benefit from reintegration packages and the assistance provided through the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme.

Sexual violence

67. The scale with which sexual violence continues to be perpetrated across the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is directly related to the near-total impunity with which perpetrators commit their crimes. Since 2004, a joint initiative to address sexual violence has brought together United Nations agencies, seven governmental ministries, and international and national non-governmental organizations under the leadership of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This initiative promotes a holistic response to sexual violence, which includes prevention, capacity-building of partners, medical and psychosocial care, livelihood support, legal assistance for victims and the strengthening of the legal framework and its application. Given the persistence of widespread sexual violence linked to military operations, a rapid response capacity has been developed in areas still affected by armed conflict to identify such cases with the aim of providing an immediate (i.e., within 72 hours) response.

68. Within this framework, a major three-year joint project was funded by the Government of Canada in 2006 to prevent and reduce incidents of sexual violence in North and South Kivu provinces. This programme replicates the project that was implemented in 2005 in Province Orientale and Equateur and Maniema provinces with Belgian funding. The project involves three United Nations agencies — UNFPA, as lead agency, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights — and dozens of local partners. The Canadian-funded project in the Kivus, along with the UNICEF programme in Ituri, has provided assistance to 4,222 child survivors of sexual violence. Of these, 1,755 received medical assistance, 2,377 received psychosocial care, and 357 received support for livelihoods activities.

69. In all provinces, male survivors of sexual violence (who were absent at the beginning of the programme) are slowly starting to break the silence and are coming forward to ask for medical and psychosocial care.

70. There are enormous challenges that hinder the prevention of and response to sexual violence:

(a) The weakness of the judicial system in investigating, prosecuting and detaining perpetrators of sexual violence and in allocating compensation to survivors, thereby creating a culture of silence and impunity;

(b) The fear of ostracism and retribution that often prevents survivors from coming forward;

(c) The unstable security situation in many parts of the eastern region of the country (e.g., northern Ituri district, and the Masisi, Rutshuru and southern Lubero territories of North Kivu province) exacerbates the commission of sexual violence and hampers survivors in accessing appropriate medical care.

VI. Recommendations

71. I welcome the efforts to support the reform of the security sector undertaken by MONUC, the European Union and others and reaffirm the need to ensure that child protection concerns are integrated in training and awareness-raising programmes and that priority is assigned to altering the prevailing culture of indiscipline and tolerance of abuses against children and civilians.

72. To address the issue of impunity for grave violations of children's rights, I strongly urge the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the assistance of MONUC forces, as necessary, to act upon their arrest warrants for Laurent Nkunda and confirm the charges against former Mai-Mai Commander Kyungu Mutanga, known as Gédéon, and to remind the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of its responsibility to rearrest Jean-Pierre Biyoyo, former Commander of the Mudundu 40 armed group, who was sentenced by the Bukavu Tribunal de garrison in March 2006 to 5 years' imprisonment for the de facto recruitment and use of children as soldiers.

73. I encourage the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and donors to devote greater resources to developing the national judicial and penitentiary systems in an effort to promote accountability for violations of children's rights. Child-friendly procedures should be integrated into the judicial systems to ensure the protection of child victims and witnesses of crime, in line with the Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/20 of 22 July 2005.

74. I also urge the Government of Rwanda to act immediately, in collaboration with UNHCR and child protection partners, to stop all recruitment of Congolese children from refugee camps in Rwanda, as well as of Rwandan children for use in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Governments of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo should also ensure that protective mechanisms are in place for Rwandan and Congolese children released from armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and returned to Rwanda.

75. I call on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and key donors to urgently identify institutional and financial mechanisms to complete the process of identification, verification and separation of children among FARDC non-integrated forces and dissident or non-eligible armed groups, using specific mechanisms to reach children, distinct from the adult-oriented national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and in line with the Principles and Guidelines to Protect Children from Unlawful Recruitment or Use by Armed Forces or Armed Groups.¹

76. I also affirm the need for the Armed Forces (FARDC) and the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to facilitate the work of child protection partners in separating children from the mixed brigades and taking the necessary measures against the commanders (and those at the lower levels of command) who continue to obstruct the separation of children.

77. In line with priorities currently under discussion in connection with the country assistance framework, donors should allocate funding to support reintegration activities for children (boys and girls) formerly associated with armed forces and groups. An emphasis on educational and socio-economic reintegration activities will also help to prevent the re-enrolment of children in armed forces and groups by providing them with a viable alternative.

78. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and donors should grant adequate resources to the implementation of projects aimed at responding to sexual violence against women through primary health-care programmes that facilitate access to health centres and by providing medical services to women in general, rather than exclusively to women who are victims of abuse, thus avoiding the stigmatization of victims of sexual violence.

Notes

- ¹ The Principles and Guidelines (known as "the Paris Principles") were endorsed, along with the Paris Commitments to Protect Children Unlawfully Recruited or Used by Armed Forces or Armed Groups ("the Paris Commitments"), at the international, high-level conference organized jointly by the Government of France and UNICEF and hosted by the Government in Paris, on 5 and 6 February 2007.

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**Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of
Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)****I. Introduction**

1. The present report is the fourth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), notably on efforts towards the achievement of a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon and a long-term solution based on the principles and elements outlined in paragraph 8 of the resolution. It provides a comprehensive assessment of the steps taken to implement resolution 1701 (2006) since my quarterly report issued on 14 March 2007 (S/2007/147).

2. The present report is being issued as we approach the first anniversary of the conflict that took place during the second quarter of 2006 between Hizbullah and Israel. On 12 July 2006, eight Israeli soldiers were killed and two soldiers, Eldad Regev and Ehud Goldwasser, were abducted and are still being held by Hizbullah. The event precipitated Israeli military reprisals on the same day and Hizbullah rocket fire into northern Israel, igniting a conflict that ultimately led to the deaths of nearly 1,200 Lebanese and 160 Israelis, the destruction of much of Lebanon's infrastructure and severe damage to the economies of both countries. The present report highlights both continuing progress in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) and areas of concern, which to date, have not led to the establishment of a permanent ceasefire and a long-term solution as envisioned in the resolution. I am encouraged by the significant deployment of the Lebanese Armed Forces and of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the area south of the Litani River, both of whose activities aim to ensure that the area is free of any unauthorized armed personnel, assets and weapons and that there continue to be no positions other than those of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL along the Blue Line. This constitutes a strengthening of the security arrangements aimed at preventing the resumption of hostilities in the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River. I am also pleased to report that there remains an enduring commitment by the Government of Lebanon and the Government of Israel to resolution 1701 (2006).

3. I am deeply concerned, however, that Lebanon remains in the midst of a debilitating political crisis and faces ongoing attacks aimed at destabilizing and undermining its sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence. During the reporting period, the country witnessed fighting between militants from the Fatah



al-Islam group and the Lebanese security forces, the worst internal fighting since its civil war, which lasted from 1995 to 1990; a series of bomb explosions in and around Beirut, the latest of which killed Walid Eido, a member of the Lebanese Parliament, and nine others on 13 June; and a bomb attack on 24 June against UNIFIL that killed six peacekeepers serving with the Spanish contingent. In addition, the firing of Katyusha rockets from southern Lebanon into northern Israel on 17 June by unknown elements was the most serious breach of the cessation of hostilities since the end of the war. Such incidents pose a direct challenge to both the new security arrangements in southern Lebanon and to the stability of the country as a whole.

4. Against this background, I am concerned that continued implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) may face recurring difficulties. Greater progress is necessary on key issues that are central to the achievement of a permanent ceasefire and a longer-term solution, such as the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and of the Lebanese prisoners, the enforcement of the arms embargo, the halting of Israeli air violations of Lebanese sovereignty and the Shab'a Farms issue.

II. Attack against the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

5. As the present report was being finalized, on 24 June, a Spanish battalion patrol was hit by an explosion on the main road between the towns of Marjayoun and Khiam. The initial investigation confirmed that the explosion was caused by a car bomb. Six UNIFIL personnel serving with the Spanish contingent were killed, and two others were injured. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

6. The Lebanese political leadership, including Prime Minister Siniora, condemned the attack and expressed condolences to UNIFIL and to the Governments of the nations concerned. Hizbullah also denounced the attack, stating that it only hurt the people of Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon has established a high commission to investigate the attack and an investigation by UNIFIL is also under way.

7. I am deeply saddened and condemn in the strongest possible terms that terrorist attack against soldiers who had gone to Lebanon in the name of peace. I urge the Government of Lebanon to bring to justice those responsible as swiftly as possible.

8. In recent months, there have been a number of threats against UNIFIL from militant groups. UNIFIL has put in place a number of mitigation measures to ensure the safety and security of its military and civilian personnel and of its installations. It has reinforced its installations throughout its area of operations south of the Litani River and in Beirut and has implemented enhanced security procedures for all of its military and civilian personnel. Once the investigation into the 24 June attack is concluded, security arrangements will be further adjusted, if and as necessary, to mitigate the potential for such incidents in the future. At the same time, all measures will continue to ensure that mandated activities are conducted without hindrance, while taking due care of the prevailing security environment.

III. Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Respect for the Blue Line

9. The military and security situation in the UNIFIL area of operations has been generally stable since my report of 14 March 2007 (S/2007/147). However, in the most serious breach of the cessation of hostilities and violation of the Blue Line since the end of the conflict in 2006, three Katyusha rockets were launched from the area of El Aadeisse in south Lebanon on 17 June 2007. Despite very rudimentary launching mechanisms, two of the rockets landed in the Israeli town of Kiryat Shmona, causing minor damage but claiming no casualties. The attack was carried out by unidentified perpetrators. A group under the name Jihadi Badr Brigades-Lebanon branch claimed responsibility; however, its claim could not as yet be verified. Immediately after the attack occurred, Hizbullah denied any responsibility or knowledge of the attack and issued a press statement to that effect.

10. The Lebanese Armed Forces quickly deployed to the area, along with units from UNIFIL and deactivated a fourth rocket that had failed to fire. No suspects were found at the site.

11. Subsequent to the attack, the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed additional personnel in the area, established a number of new checkpoints and detained over 200 persons for investigation. UNIFIL has also increased its patrolling activities in the area, working in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces and the UNIFIL Force Commander and maintaining open lines of communication with the army senior commanders on both sides. The Prime Minister of Lebanon, the Speaker of the Parliament and the Lebanese Armed Forces promptly issued statements strongly condemning the attack.

12. UNIFIL was also in close contact with the Israel Defense Forces immediately after the incident occurred to urge Israel to exercise maximum restraint. Israel has so far refrained from taking retaliatory action.

13. I would like to commend the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Israel Defense Forces and UNIFIL for the way in which they handled the incident. It shows that, with appropriate coordination and liaison arrangements in place, it is possible to prevent such incidents from escalating. However, the fact that as yet unidentified elements were able to execute the attack from southern Lebanon is deeply troubling and underlines the need to further strengthen security arrangements, which are being put in place by the Lebanese Armed Forces, together with UNIFIL.

14. The situation along the Blue Line remains tense and fragile. On a number of occasions, the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces patrols have aimed weapons at each other across the Blue Line. In each instance, UNIFIL has acted promptly to dispatch a patrol to the scene to calm the situation and prevent confrontation. A number of ground violations by both sides have also raised tensions. On 28 May, the Israel Defense Forces violated the Blue Line by approximately 60 metres in the vicinity of United Nations position 4-31, with a tank and earthworks machinery. The Israel Defense Forces subsequently stated that the exact location of the Blue Line at the spot was unclear and that the violation had occurred inadvertently. A number of minor violations have also occurred on the Lebanese side, predominantly by shepherds and hunters. On two occasions, individuals who crossed the Blue Line were detained by the Israel Defense Forces

and released hours later. Inadvertent crossings are a particular concern in the Shab'a Farms region where there is rough terrain and no Israeli technical fence. The Force Commander of UNIFIL has urged both parties to act with restraint and refrain from activities that contribute to tension along the Blue Line.

15. The ground violations highlight the importance of visibly marking the Blue Line in sensitive areas, in particular where there is a considerable distance between the Blue Line and the Israeli technical fence. In my report dated 14 March, I noted that both parties had orally agreed to the UNIFIL proposal to mark the Blue Line. After further intensive discussions in tripartite meetings on the issue, the Government of Lebanon has officially accepted the UNIFIL proposed technical process for marking the Blue Line, while the Government of Israel has sought clarifications. I urge both parties to move forward expeditiously with UNIFIL on the proposal, which, if fully implemented on the ground, would build trust, decrease tension and significantly contribute towards a reduction in incidents and inadvertent violations of the Blue Line.

16. UNIFIL has reported a significant increase in Israeli air violations, through jet and unmanned aerial vehicle overflights of Lebanese territory. These violations occur on an almost daily basis, frequently numbering between 15 and 20 overflights, and even reaching 32, in a single day. The Government of Lebanon continues to protest the overflights as a serious violation of Lebanese sovereignty and of resolution 1701 (2006). The Government of Israel maintains that they are a necessary security measure that will continue until its two abducted soldiers are released and the measures set out in paragraphs 14 and 15 of resolution 1701 (2006) are implemented in full. Notwithstanding the essential requirement to fully implement all provisions of resolution 1701 (2006), Israeli overflights not only constitute repeated violations of that and other relevant Security Council resolutions; they also undermine the credibility of both UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces in the eyes of the local population and negatively affect efforts to stabilize the situation on the ground.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

17. The Force Commander of UNIFIL continues to hold regular tripartite meetings with senior representatives of the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces, in which critical security issues are addressed. Steady progress has been made on a number of key areas through this forum, which is essential to UNIFIL efforts to foster stability and prevent incidents across the Blue Line.

18. I am pleased to report that the liaison and coordination arrangements, referred to in my previous report, were accepted by both parties and came into force during the period under review, following written notification of acceptance from the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces. The arrangements stipulate that both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces must ensure that an officer at the rank of General, or his deputy, can be contacted at all times by the UNIFIL Force Commander so that any incident can be quickly resolved before it escalates. As noted above, the benefits of having strong coordination and liaison arrangements became clear during the incident of 17 June, where the Force Commander was able to establish and maintain a continuous exchange with senior-level officers of the Israel Defense Forces and of the Lebanese Armed Forces.

UNIFIL is in the process of establishing a hotline between the Force Commander and his counterparts in the Lebanese Armed Forces and Israel Defense Forces.

19. The Israel Defense Forces remain in control of the northern part of Ghajar village, north of the Blue Line inside Lebanese territory, although they do not maintain a permanent military presence. Discussions on the issue of temporary security arrangements for northern Ghajar continue in tripartite meetings, and both parties indicate that they are committed to reaching an agreement with UNIFIL, which would facilitate Israeli withdrawal from the area. However, the duration of the temporary security arrangements still remains a point of contention. The UNIFIL Force Commander is actively engaged with both sides in an attempt to overcome the obstacle and finalize the arrangements. I am concerned that further delay in resolving the issue may contribute to increasing tensions along the Blue Line. It should be recalled that, as long as the Israel Defense Forces remains in northern Ghajar, Israel will have yet to complete its withdrawal from southern Lebanon in accordance with its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006).

20. The existing planning and coordination mechanism between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Army Command remains instrumental for coordinating activities on the ground. Collaboration between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces and Lebanese Navy has been further strengthened through coordinated exercises and training initiatives during the reporting period. Liaison officers of the Lebanese Armed Forces are detached in the UNIFIL headquarters Joint Operation Centre and Naval Operation Centre, in both sector headquarters and in all infantry battalions. While UNIFIL maintains two officers at the Israel Defense Forces Northern Command headquarters in Zefat, agreement has yet to be reached between the Government of Israel and the United Nations on establishing a civilian-led integrated UNIFIL liaison office in Tel Aviv.

21. The Lebanese Armed Forces maintain four infantry brigades south of the Litani River, operating 145 positions. Efforts are under way to increase and fortify the 47 Lebanese Armed Forces observation towers and positions along the Blue Line. The Lebanese Armed Forces monitor and control entry into the UNIFIL area of operations across the Litani River through permanent checkpoints and patrols. They have also requested UNIFIL assistance in building a military road parallel to the Blue Line in order to improve monitoring capabilities. Construction of that road is contingent upon the marking of the Blue Line.

22. UNIFIL continues to implement its mandate to assist the Lebanese Armed Forces in ensuring that the area between the Blue Line and the Litani River is free of unauthorized armed personnel, assets, weapons, infrastructure or related materiel. To that end, UNIFIL carries out more than 400 patrols per day throughout its area of operations, night surveillance on suspected activities by armed elements and operations in open areas. In addition, UNIFIL troops stop any individual if they have reason to suspect any activity in violation of resolution 1701 (2006).

23. Coordinated operations undertaken by the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL during the period under review have led to the discovery of abandoned arms, ammunition, explosive devices, bunkers and related infrastructure. The most significant discoveries were an ammunition dump and 17 rockets in the vicinity of El Fardeis, a cave with 100 mortar bombs in the vicinity of Mazraat Islamiye, two rocket launchers in Rchaf, a cave containing mines, mortars and detonators in the Kafr Shouba area and a weapons and ammunitions cache containing an anti-tank

recoilless gun with two rocket launchers and ammunition in the same general area. The Lebanese Armed Forces destroy or confiscate all arms and ammunition found south of the Litani River.

24. With the exception of two very disturbing incidents, which occurred at the end of the reporting period, namely, the 17 June rocket attack on Kiryat Shemona and the 24 June attack on UNIFIL, UNIFIL has neither discovered, nor received reports of, armed elements inside its area of operations, other than those within Palestinian refugee camps and local hunters. At the same time, the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL have not detected any illegal transfers of arms south of the Litani River. However, the two recent attacks, as well as the continuing weapons discoveries by UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces, clearly indicate that there are still weapons in the UNIFIL area of operations and persons prepared to use them. This underlines the importance of the activities of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL to ensure that the area becomes free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons, which will require more time to achieve. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces have very strict security controls in place, including a significant number of positions, Lebanese Armed Forces checkpoints and UNIFIL road and open area patrols. In addition, as a consequence of the two attacks, the Lebanese Armed Forces are now taking additional security steps to address the situation in any suspected areas and UNIFIL will support their efforts.

25. The Government of Israel continues to claim that Hizbullah is rebuilding its military capacity primarily north but also south of the Litani River. UNIFIL, in collaboration with the Lebanese Armed Forces, stands ready to immediately investigate any such claims or alleged violations of resolution 1701 (2006) once the necessary specific information and evidence has been received. Hizbullah continues to have strong support among the local population and maintains a significant non-military presence. Suspected members have continued to closely monitor UNIFIL activities throughout the period under review, including through the taking of photographs and filming.

26. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force, in collaboration with the Lebanese Navy, continues to enhance control of Lebanese territorial waters to prevent entry into Lebanon of unauthorized arms or related materiel by sea. Since my last report, the Maritime Task Force has hailed more than 3,000 ships. The identities of all vessels were checked and confirmed, and 25 suspicious vessels were inspected by Lebanese naval and customs officials on arrival in port. No attempts to smuggle weapons were reported. I am grateful to the Government of Germany for donating two naval vessels to the Lebanese Navy, which will represent a significant step in building its naval capacity and assisting Lebanon to assume increased responsibility for securing its sea boundaries.

27. I regret to report that there have been several occasions during the reporting period when actions by Israel Defense Forces personnel have endangered their own security and that of United Nations personnel. In an incident on 30 April, a fast patrol boat of the Israel Defense Forces approached a UNIFIL Maritime Task Force frigate at high speed and on a collision with the frigate and did not respond to the frigate's radio communication. The frigate was only able to avoid collision by rapidly and significantly reducing speed. On two other occasions, Israeli aircraft flew at low altitude over Maritime Task Force frigates in contravention of established procedures. In a meeting between the Maritime Task Force Commander

and his Israeli Navy counterpart, the Israel Defense Forces reassured UNIFIL that they would adhere to the operational arrangements between the Israel Defense Forces and the UNIFIL Maritime Task Force.

28. Relations between UNIFIL and the local population have continued to develop, especially through the work undertaken by the UNIFIL Civilian-military cooperation units and civil affairs teams. The implementation of quick-impact projects is proving to be a critical instrument for assisting local communities. The Force Commander has also initiated a series of meetings with community leaders throughout the UNIFIL area of operations, which have further helped to build trust and confidence as well as broaden the understanding of the UNIFIL mandate within local communities. Nevertheless, UNIFIL patrols have faced a number of isolated stone-throwing and other incidents, mainly by local youths. The Lebanese Armed Forces have taken a proactive role in preventing and addressing those incidents and in some cases have detained the perpetrators.

C. Disarming armed groups

29. A number of reports have indicated an increase in activities conducted by armed elements north of the Litani River, where the Lebanese authorities and the Lebanese Armed Forces have sole security responsibility. Suspected Hizbullah armed elements are alleged to be constructing new facilities in the Bekaa valley, including command and control centres and rocket launching capabilities, and conducting military training exercises. The reports have not been refuted by Hizbullah.

30. In identical letters dated 12 June from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to me and to the President of the Security Council (S/2007/348-A/61/953), the Government of Lebanon provided detailed information, collected by the Lebanese Armed Forces, on the activities of Palestinian armed elements and groups outside the Palestinian refugee camps based in Lebanon. A comprehensive update on the status of Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias has also been provided in my most recent semi-annual report (S/2009/262) and in a briefing in June on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004).

31. Specifically, we have been informed by the Government of Lebanon that the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah-Intifada have reinforced their posts throughout the country following the attacks launched by Fatah al-Islam against the Lebanese Armed Forces in northern Lebanon. The information provides details of reinforcements of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command in areas such as Jubayla and Ain el-Bayda outposts, where about 100 members wearing military uniforms similar to those of the Lebanese Armed Forces have been deployed. In the Qussaya outpost, the group has installed eight rocket launchers (12- and 40-barrel) and directed them towards the Rayak airport. The information also outlines how Fatah-Intifada has reinforced its posts in Wadi al-Asswad, Balta, Helwa and Deir el-Achayer. Their number is estimated at about 500 men equipped with sophisticated weaponry, including rockets, mortars, anti-tank guns (106 mm recoilless gun and B10 gun) and anti-aircraft guns.

32. It is widely believed in Lebanon, including by the Government, that the strengthening of Fatah-Intifada outposts and those of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command could not have taken place without the tacit knowledge and support of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Prime Minister of Lebanon has recently stated publicly that the outposts have been reinforced with munitions, arms and fighters by the Syrian Arab Republic. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has denied such assertions as misleading. It should be noted that the Lebanese national dialogue involving all major Lebanese political parties, which was held in April and May 2006, agreed that Palestinian armed groups outside the Palestinian camps should be disarmed within six months. I expect the support of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on that particular issue.

33. In addition, the Government of Lebanon provided us with information on the recent seizure of a truckload of Grad rockets, mortars and ammunition for automatic rifles and machine guns. The truckload, which belonged to Hizbullah, was seized on 5 June 2007 at a checkpoint of the Lebanese Armed Forces at Douriss near Baalbek in east Lebanon's Bekaa valley. According to the Government of Lebanon, the arms were being moved within the country. There seems to be an emerging consensus in Lebanon that the incident is similar to the one that took place on 8 February 2007, which was documented in my most recent report to the Council on implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/147).

34. The reports are disconcerting and a cause of great concern and constitute a clear violation of both the letter and spirit of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) as well as resolution 1559 (2004).

35. With reference to paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006) and the issue of disarmament, I continue to believe that the disarmament of Hizbullah and other militia should be conducted through a Lebanese-led political process that will lead to the full restoration of the authority of the Government of Lebanon in all its territory so that there will be no weapons or authority other than its own.

36. The Government of Lebanon maintains that the question of Hizbullah arms and the arms of other militias remains open and in the centre of the political debate. However, no progress on the issue has been made. The ongoing political crisis continues to prevent the parties from discussing national dialogue issues or making progress on the Government's seven-point plan, which was adopted on 27 July 2006.

D. Arms embargo

37. Further to the update I have provided in relation to possible breaches of the arms embargo in my fifth semi-annual report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2007/262), I have received further disturbing information from the Government of Lebanon. The Government of Lebanon has informed me that on 6 June 2007, four truck carriers, each carrying two vehicles mounted with 40-barrel rocket launchers (a total of eight rocket-launchers) were seen by the Lebanese Armed Forces heading from Al-Kafeer in the Syrian Arab Republic across the Lebanese-Syrian border to Idriss Fortness and then on to an outpost of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command in Jabal al-Maaysara.

38. For its part, the Government of Israel continues to allege significant breaches of the arms embargo across the Lebanese-Syrian border, which it states, pose a serious strategic threat to the security of Israel and its citizens. It has claimed that the transfer of sophisticated weaponry by the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran across the Lebanese-Syrian border, including long-range rockets (with a range of 250 miles), anti-tank and anti-aircraft defence systems, occurs on a weekly basis, enabling Hizbullah to rearm to the same levels as before the past year's war or beyond. It has not provided any further specific evidence to back up those claims.

39. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has denied any involvement in effecting breaches of the arms embargo. In its identical letters to me and the President of the Security Council dated 4 May 2007, it provided a table listing weapons and ammunition smuggled into the Syrian Arab Republic from Lebanon, which have been confiscated by the Syrian security forces during the period from 26 April 2005, the date of the withdrawal of the Syrian army from Lebanon, to 4 May 2007. Through its identical letters to me and the President of the Security Council dated 11 May 2007, and subsequently, the Syrian authorities have informed me of their support for the meetings of the regional governors on either side of the Lebanese-Syrian border to agree to measures to halt smuggling and unauthorized movements across the border. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has informed us that it has recently requested technical border assistance from European Governments including the provision of equipment for the border and the training of Syrian border guards.

40. The Government of Lebanon has stated to me that it has a vital interest in controlling its borders to prevent the smuggling of arms, munitions and personnel into its territory. It has repeated its request that any information about illegal smuggling of arms or persons in the possession of any third country be shared with the Government of Lebanon directly, if possible, or, alternatively, through the United Nations. It has informed me that the Lebanese Armed Forces have maintained their positions along its border with the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, the Government of Lebanon has informed me that the various security crises throughout the reporting period have placed a huge strain on the Lebanese Armed Forces, which have now been called upon to perform such various but critical tasks as fighting militants in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp; internal security; traditional territorial defence; and anti-smuggling activities. In that context, the Government of Lebanon has made it clear that the control of its northern and eastern borders is a responsibility shared both by the Syrian Arab Republic and by Lebanon, in accordance with paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006).

41. Pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council of 17 April 2007, in which the President encouraged me to establish an independent team to fully assess the monitoring of the Lebanese-Syrian border and to report thereon before submission of the present report, I am pleased that the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team has completed its work and has now submitted its report. In my view, this is a crucial report, which provides a professional and detailed technical evaluation of the difficult situation along the entire Lebanese-Syrian border. I note in particular the recommendations to improve, urgently and in the longer term, Lebanese capacities to secure the border regime along Lebanon's border with the Syrian Arab Republic. The report clearly shows that, in addition to

the valuable assistance being provided by the German pilot project along the northern border and the proposals for Lebanese integrated border management, further international assistance is urgently required to enhance Lebanese capabilities and to ensure that there are no breaches of the arms embargo.

E. Land mines and cluster bombs

42. In southern Lebanon, clean-up of the estimated 1 million unexploded cluster munitions continues. Since my previous report to the Security Council, an additional 50 new cluster bomblet strike locations have been identified by the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre-South Lebanon. As of 31 May 2007, 904 cluster bomblet strike locations have been recorded, contaminating an area of up to 36.6 million square metres.

43. As a result of the joint efforts of the Lebanese Armed Forces, 22 UNIFIL teams and 75 United Nations contracted and bilaterally funded clearance teams operating under the coordination of the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre-South Lebanon, 28 per cent of the surface and 15 per cent of the subsurface of the 36.6 million square metres have been cleared, and 117,872 of an estimated 1 million unexploded cluster munitions have been neutralized.

44. While there has been a decrease in the number of casualty figures in recent months, there have been 22 additional incidents among civilians since my previous report, with one person killed and 21 injured. Since the cessation of hostilities came into effect, a total of 203 civilians have been injured (180) or killed (23) as a result of cluster munitions. I regret to have to report that, despite a number of attempts by United Nations senior officials to obtain information regarding the firing data of cluster munitions utilized during the conflict in the second quarter of 2006, Israel has yet to provide that critical data. I call on the Government of Israel once again to provide the information to the United Nations.

F. Abducted soldiers and prisoners

45. Despite major efforts of the facilitator and the flexibility of Israel beyond the framework of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), implementation of the humanitarian aspects of the resolution has not yet been possible.

46. Controversial issues raised by Hizbullah require sustained and complicated efforts for reaching a solution. Progress is therefore slow, but continues. The situation unfortunately is aggravated by Hizbullah's persistent refusal to provide proof that the two soldiers are alive. Worries are thus increasing about their fate. I share deeply the anxiety of the families and call again on Hizbullah to reconsider this posture, which contradicts basic humanitarian values.

47. Despite difficulties, both sides request further United Nations facilitation efforts in order to overcome the remaining obstacles. In that regard, Hizbullah expressed its hope that a compromise be found prior to the next report to the Security Council to be submitted in September 2007. Israel is still ready to show flexibility with regard to the Lebanese prisoners. Against this background, I still hope that a solution can be found soon on the basis of moderation and of strict restraint in demands, in compliance with resolution 1701 (2006).

G. Delineation of borders

48. My representatives and I have continued to stress to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Government of Lebanon the importance of the final determination of their common borders for peaceful coexistence and good neighbourliness. Bilateral agreement on the borders would present a permanent solution to the issue of delineating Lebanon's international boundaries with the Syrian Arab Republic in fulfilment of resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has insisted, as stated in more detail in my semi-annual reports on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), that the demarcation of the borders is a bilateral matter. However, no movement has been reported by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on reactivating the Lebanese-Syrian border committee, suggested by President Assad at his most recent meeting with me on 24 April 2007.

49. Specifically, as regards the Shab'a Farms, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, while agreeing with the Lebanese position in maintaining that the Shab'a Farms are Lebanese, has conveyed to me its view that a resolution of the issue would be possible only after a peace treaty with Israel has been concluded. I would encourage the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to reconsider this policy, which is in contradiction of resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). At the same time, I continue to investigate the cartographic, legal and political implications of the alternative path suggested by the Government of Lebanon in its seven-point plan, namely placing the Shab'a Farms under United Nations jurisdiction until a boundary is permanently delineated.

50. I am pleased to report that, based on the best available information, the senior cartographer has made solid progress towards a provisional determination of the geographical extent of the Shab'a Farms area. The Government of Lebanon has submitted to us new and useful material. I hope the Council will understand the subsequent need to discuss the cartographer's findings with the relevant parties. Israel has indicated its willingness to agree to my request to enable the cartographer to visit the area in the next few weeks. I look forward to delivering a detailed report on the conclusions of his work and on our discussions with the relevant parties, including with the Government of Israel, the Government of Lebanon and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, in my next report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

IV. Deployment of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

51. Since my previous report, UNIFIL strength has increased as planned. The total number of military personnel, as of 19 June 2007, now stands at 13,313. That number includes 11,113 UNIFIL ground troops deployed in two sectors, with headquarters in Tibnin and Marjayoun, and 2,000 personnel serving in the Maritime Task Force, in addition to 179 staff officers at UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura and 21 national support elements. UNIFIL is assisted in its tasks by 51 military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. Twenty-nine staff officers serve with the Strategic Military Cell based at United Nations Headquarters. With the planned deployment of approximately 340 troops from the Republic of

Korea in July, UNIFIL strength will reach approximately 13,700 military personnel from 30 troop-contributing countries. UNIFIL troops have reached a high level of operational readiness, which allows them to react promptly to incidents throughout its area of operations. The civilian component has also continued to strengthen across all components of the mission. As of 5 June 2007, UNIFIL civilian staff strength totalled 706 (254 international and 452 national staff).

52. The mission is carrying out an expansion and refurbishment programme of its Naqoura headquarters to ensure adequate facilities for all personnel, in full compliance with minimum operating security standard requirements. UNIFIL will also refurbish the Naqoura port that borders UNIFIL headquarters to provide improved maritime access to UNIFIL, resulting in better security for UNIFIL in a crisis situation, and to support the Lebanese Armed Forces and local civilian maritime activities.

V. Observations

53. Almost one year has passed since hostilities erupted in southern Lebanon in July 2006. The swift and effective deployment of a significantly expanded peacekeeping force has helped to establish a new strategic military and security environment in southern Lebanon. I am grateful to the 30 troop-contributing countries that make up the new UNIFIL. The speed with which they responded to resolution 1701 (2006) and the activities that their troops undertake on a daily basis have been critical in preventing a recurrence of hostilities across the Blue Line. At the same time, we must recognize the immense and historic contribution of the Lebanese Armed Forces in helping to stabilize the situation in southern Lebanon. Over the past 10 months, the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL have developed a partnership that has achieved a number of key objectives contained in the resolution and has helped to maintain the cessation of hostilities.

54. The 17 June rocket attack from southern Lebanon against Israel constitutes a serious breach of the cessation of hostilities. The attack did not come entirely as a surprise since hostile groups have publicly voiced their opposition to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In order to address the threat, it is important that all parties maintain their strong commitment and continue to show determination to respect the cessation of hostilities agreement and implement all provisions of the resolution.

55. As I have done in previous reports, I urge the international community to provide relevant, timely and necessary bilateral assistance and support to the Lebanese Armed Forces to help it implement its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006). For the Government of Lebanon to extend its authority and exercise full sovereignty, it is crucial that it has credible and legitimate armed forces capable of ensuring security and stability over all its territory. There is a risk that the current fighting in Nahr Al-Bared refugee camp and the volatile situation in other camps may lead to additional shortages of resources and could negatively affect the ability of the Lebanese Armed Forces to carry out its obligations under resolution 1701 (2006). While appreciating the considerable difficulties faced by the Lebanese Armed Forces at the current time, I appreciate the Government's pledge to maintain the army's high visibility and close coordination with UNIFIL in southern Lebanon.

The rocket attack on 17 June and the attack against UNIFIL one week later only serve to underline the importance of maintaining the highest degree of vigilance.

56. I also appreciate the support of the Government of Israel and of the Israel Defense Forces for UNIFIL. In this connection, I note especially the words of appreciation expressed to me and other United Nations personnel by a number of senior Israeli political and military officials, and their acknowledgement of the new strategic realities created by the deployment of UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces in southern Lebanon. I welcome the decision of the Government of Israel not to retaliate following the rocket attack on 17 June. I regret, however, that the Israel Defense Forces continue with almost daily flights over Lebanese territory and, once again, I call upon the Government of Israel to cease the air violations.

57. With reference to paragraph 6 of resolution 1701 (2006), I am pleased to report that the international community has continued to provide assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon. Through the conference held in Stockholm, which focused on emergency assistance and rehabilitation, and more recently, through the Paris III process, Lebanon has received substantial international financial support. However, updated information related to donor commitments and disbursement figures highlight the importance for all donors to fulfil their pledges of financial assistance and reconstruction programmes.

58. As noted above, as well as in previous reports, Israel has yet to provide detailed firing data that would give the exact location, quantity and type of cluster munitions utilized during the conflict in the second quarter of 2006. The provision of such information to UNIFIL would greatly assist the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre in its efforts to clean up the estimated 1 million unexploded cluster munitions. While the Lebanese Armed Forces, the United Nations and the bilaterally funded teams are making progress, it will take until 2008 to clear the estimated 36.6 million square metres contaminated by the cluster munitions. Continuing deaths and injuries to Lebanese civilians caused by those munitions, not to mention the loss of agricultural production in affected areas, only increases the local population's antagonism towards Israel. I again urge Israel to provide detailed data on its use of cluster munitions to the United Nations as soon as possible.

59. I am disturbed by the persistent reports pointing to breaches of the arms embargo along the Lebanese-Syrian border. Such reports constitute a major impediment to the establishment of the permanent ceasefire and long-term solution envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). While a complete sealing of the border may not be possible, I am concerned that the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team concludes in its report that the Lebanese-Syrian border is not sufficiently secure and that Lebanese capabilities are lacking. I also note the observation contained in the report that the potential already exists to significantly improve the border security regime and that the Government of Lebanon could do more with existing capabilities. I would recommend that the Government of Lebanon implement the findings of the report in full. Further to the recommendations of the Lebanon Independent Border Assessment Team, I would again call upon Member States and relevant regional organizations to provide the urgently needed technical assistance, training and equipment that the Government of Lebanon requires to strengthen the border security regime along its border with the Syrian Arab Republic, and to ensure the full implementation of paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006), including the arms embargo.

60. The Syrian Arab Republic, other regional States and the Islamic Republic of Iran have a particular responsibility to ensure that the provisions of resolution 1701 (2006) related to the arms embargo are fully respected. The Syrian Arab Republic, in particular, has a shared responsibility in controlling its borders with Lebanon and in implementing paragraph 15 of resolution 1701 (2006), including in safeguarding against breaches of the arms embargo. In this regard, I urge the Syrian Arab Republic to do more to control its border with Lebanon and I look forward to specific proposals from the Syrian authorities in time for the next quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), which is due in September. I have taken note of the Syrian Arab Republic's expressed willingness to consider working with European Governments on improving border security. I welcome this development. I also welcome and would encourage, as suggested by the Government of Lebanon, the establishment of a mechanism also including the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the European Union or the United Nations, which would aim to improve technical facilities and arrangements along Lebanon's border with the Syrian Arab Republic.

61. As I stated in my previous report, border delineation, including in the Shab'a Farms area, remains a key issue in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In that regard, I am disappointed that no further progress has been made between the Government of Lebanon and the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in determining their common borders. I call again on the Syrian Arab Republic to take the necessary steps with Lebanon to delineate their common border in accordance with resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). It should be recognized that joint Lebanese-Syrian boundary committees demonstrated good collaboration and agreement on boundary procedures during the 1960s. It is suggested that with the assistance of the United Nations a joint boundary commission could be re-established.

62. I would like to commend the senior cartographer on his work, to date, on developing an accurate territorial definition of the Shab'a Farms area. I believe the provisional determination of the geographical extent of the Shab'a Farms area based on the best information available, provides a good basis on which to move the issue forward. I would note the cooperation that the Government of Lebanon has given to the senior cartographer in his work and would urge Member States, in particular the Syrian Arab Republic, to provide any relevant documentation in their possession and other assistance. In this regard, I am pleased that the Government of Israel has agreed to a visit by the senior cartographer to the Shab'a Farms area. I am hopeful that further discussions on the area, including on its territorial definition, with the Governments of Israel, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic will strengthen a diplomatic process aimed at resolving this key issue in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 1701 (2006). Progress on the issue, however, cannot be separated from the principles and elements required for the permanent ceasefire and long-term solution identified in resolution 1701 (2006).

63. I am concerned by the activities of armed elements and groups and the challenges they pose for the stability and independence of Lebanon and for the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). The appalling attack on 24 June against UNIFIL is only the latest example of the threat that they pose. I am very concerned for the safety and security of all United Nations personnel based in Lebanon. Further assistance to the Government of Lebanon and its security forces is required to ensure that, as stated in its seven-point plan, it can extend its authority over its

territory through its legitimate armed forces and that there are no weapons or authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon.

64. As we move towards the one-year anniversary of the hostilities that erupted in 2006, I regret that we have not been able to arrive at a permanent ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. I also regret that further progress has not been made in obtaining the release of the abducted Israeli soldiers and on such issues as halting Israeli violations of Lebanese airspace. However, I am hopeful that a long-term solution can be found, in particular, if we further consolidate the strategic change that has occurred in southern Lebanon; strengthen the security regime along Lebanon's border with the Syrian Arab Republic; and make further progress on the issue of Shab'a Farms. Above all, I would call on Lebanon, Israel and key States such as the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the international community, to support the implementation of all aspects of resolution 1701 (2006). At a time of heightened regional instability and tension, resolution 1701 (2006) remains a vital element in helping to settle issues of critical importance to international peace and security. We must not lessen our commitment to implementing the resolution fully. At the same time, we must remain committed to the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

65. As the Security Council is aware, the UNIFIL mandate will expire on 31 August 2007. On 25 June, the Lebanese Council of Ministers requested the renewal of the mandate. On the same day, during my meeting with Prime Minister Siniora in Paris, I received a letter requesting the Council to extend the mandate for a further period of one year, without amendment. In that regard, I intend to submit a letter to the Council during the month of August requesting that it consider the renewal of the mandate.

66. In concluding, I want to pay tribute to all United Nations military and civilian personnel serving in these difficult circumstances in Lebanon. I want to express my heartfelt condolences to the Government of Spain and the families of the six peacekeepers killed in the past weekend. I would add that the terrorist attack against UNIFIL will not deter the United Nations from carrying out its Security Council-mandated activities. Rather, it redoubles our commitment to ensuring that resolution 1701 (2006) is fully implemented by all parties and that the larger United Nations goals of peace, stability and justice in the Middle East are achieved. In this regard, it will be critical at the current time to maintain the full capacities of UNIFIL in order to preserve stability in its area of operations south of the Litani River.



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Item 101 (e) of the preliminary list*

**Review and implementation of the Concluding Document
of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly:
regional confidence-building measures: activities of the
United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on
Security Questions in Central Africa**

**Security Council
Sixty-second year**

**Letter dated 15 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative
of Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations addressed to the
Secretary-General**

On behalf of the current Chairman of the Committee, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report of the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was held from 14 to 18 May 2007 in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe (see annex).

I should like to request you to have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 101 (e) of the preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-second session, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Ovidio Manuel Barbosa **Pequeño**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/62/50.



Annex to the letter dated 15 June 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Sao Tome and Principe to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa on its twenty-fifth ministerial meeting in Sao Tome, 14-18 May 2007

Introduction

The twenty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Sao Tome, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, from 14 to 18 May 2007.

The following member States took part in the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. The Central African Republic was absent. The Republic of Chad, although unable to be present, nevertheless transmitted its contribution to the proceedings.

The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General at the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting;
- A message from the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), read out by Mr. Nelson Cosme, Under-Secretary-General for Human Integration, Peace, Security and Stability.

The opening address was delivered by H.E. Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

The Committee took much of its inspiration from proposals made in that address, in particular the idea of an initiative to draft a legal instrument on small arms and light weapons control in Central Africa. It decided to name the initiative the "Sao Tome initiative".

Summary of proceedings

I. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Committee adopted the following agenda:
 1. Adoption of the agenda of the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting.
 2. Election of the Bureau.
 3. Report of the outgoing Bureau, submitted by its Chairman.
 4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in some States members of the Committee:

- (i) Republic of Burundi;
 - (ii) Central African Republic;
 - (iii) Democratic Republic of the Congo;
 - (iv) Republic of Chad.
5. Consideration of the situation in Darfur and its impact on countries members of the Committee.
6. Developments relating to security in the Great Lakes region.
7. Inter-State security cooperation among the Central African countries:
 - (i) Report on preparations for the Bahr-el-Ghazal joint military exercise (November 2007);
 - (ii) Measures to combat cross-border crime;
 - (iii) Briefing on the conclusions of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) Seminar on Cross-border Security Problems;
 - (iv) Consideration of the project for a subregional conference on cross-border security problems.
8. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa:
 - (i) Reports on the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities for the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;
 - (ii) Relationship between the Programme of Priority Activities and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region;
 - (iii) Participation by ECCAS in the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures;
 - (iv) Project for the drafting of a legal instrument on small arms and light weapons control in Central Africa;
 - (v) Project for the drafting of a code of conduct for defence and security forces in Central Africa;
 - (vi) Implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Central Africa.
9. Report by the ECCAS secretariat on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms; (strengthening of the Supreme Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), status of the ratifications of the protocol on COPAX, operationalization of the Central African Early Warning System (MARAC).
10. Exchange of views on methods of work and the programme of work: revitalization and rationalization of activities.

11. Date and place of the next meeting.
12. Other matters.
13. Adoption of the report of the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting.

II. Election of the Bureau

The Committee elected a Bureau comprised of the following countries:

- Chairman: Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe
- First Vice-Chairman: Republic of Cameroon
- Second Vice-Chairman: Republic of Angola
- Rapporteur: Republic of Gabon

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau, submitted by its Chairman

The Committee noted with interest the report on the activities of the outgoing Bureau, submitted by its Chairman. It commended the dynamism with which the Bureau had performed its duties and, in particular, its active contribution, in cooperation with the secretariat, to the revitalization of the Committee's activities and the preparation and organization of the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting. The Committee commended the outgoing Bureau for the competence and skill with which it had guided the work.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in some States members of the Committee

Developments in the situation in Central Africa, particularly in the countries covered by this geopolitical and security review, have shown sharp contrasts since the Committee's previous meeting. Despite some genuine advances in the peace processes under way, the persistence of tension, the deterioration of the security situation, and the resurgence of frequent armed confrontations highlight the fragility of peace in the countries covered.

The at times dramatic degradation of the humanitarian situation and the persistence of serious human rights violations are particularly alarming.

The situation manifestly requires the parties concerned, the other countries of the subregion and the international community to redouble their efforts to promote national reconciliation, build peace and usher in a new era of development for peoples who have been victims of the scourge of war for too long.

(i) Republic of Burundi

The Committee welcomed the progress achieved in the situation in Burundi, in particular:

(a) The progress on the implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement signed on 7 September 2006 in Dar es Salaam between the Government of Burundi and Mr. Agathon Rwasa's Forces nationales de libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL);

(b) The efforts to improve relations between the Government and the media, relations between political parties and relations with civil society;

(c) The release of former dignitaries arrested on the charge of preparing a coup d'état;

(d) The noticeable easing of political tension and the progress made in implementing the policy of national reconciliation;

(e) The pursuit of the disarmament and demobilization process and the progress achieved in disbanding militias.

The Committee welcomed the improvement of the military and security situation in Burundi. However, it deplored the continued lack of security in the country owing to the proliferation of firearms among the population and delays in implementing the Agreement. It urged the Government and PALIPEHUTU-FNL to ensure that the Agreement was fully implemented and to continue to cooperate closely in a spirit of openness in order to reach a solution to all outstanding problems. It also invited the South African mediator, the members of the regional peace initiative and the other partners to lend support to the smooth implementation of the Agreement.

The Committee encouraged the Government to continue the efforts already under way to strengthen the democratic process in Burundi, in particular by pursuing the dialogue with the political parties, cooperating with civil society, ensuring respect for the rule of law and human rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of the press, and promoting national reconciliation.

It also encouraged PALIPEHUTU-FNL to honour its commitments and to work with determination towards the full implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement in order to expedite the return of a comprehensive peace in Burundi and to alleviate the suffering of the people.

It welcomed the measures taken by the Government of Burundi to prosecute the perpetrators of human rights violations and urged it to bring to justice, without exception, anyone guilty of such acts. It also welcomed the positive impact of the peace accord between the Government of Burundi and PALIPEHUTU-FNL on security conditions and protection of human rights.

It encouraged the Government to continue its efforts to tackle the country's acute socio-economic problems and resolve serious conflicts over land ownership and use.

It launched an urgent appeal to the international community and donors to provide all necessary support to the country in the implementation of its emergency and rehabilitation programme, its economic recovery and development programme, the National Poverty Reduction Strategy, the National Peacebuilding Strategy and the rapid completion of the programme for the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

(ii) Central African Republic

The Committee expressed its deep concern about the instability characterizing the situation in the Central African Republic.

It encouraged the authorities and all the political actors to give priority to dialogue, resolve their differences peacefully and work towards the strengthening of peace and democracy in the Central African Republic.

The Committee welcomed the decision of President Bozize to initiate an inclusive dialogue with the opposition parties and the representatives of armed rebel groups. It encouraged the Panel of the Wise to pursue, with the help of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), the efforts to organize that dialogue.

It also welcomed the meetings organized with the help of BONUCA between the Government and the political parties which have helped to ease tensions.

However, it expressed grave concern about the deterioration of the security situation in the Central African Republic, in particular:

(a) The activities of armed gangs, and "road blockers" and the repeated attacks by rebels in the north, north-east, north-west and centre of the country, which result in multiple human rights violations;

(b) Armed groups' repeated violations of territorial integrity in the north, north-east and north-west of the country;

(c) The proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly in the north-east;

(d) The growing number of murders and armed robberies.

The Committee condemned the actions of the rebellion and rejected any attempt to take power by anticonstitutional means.

It appealed to the international community to give the Central African Republic the support necessary to secure its borders and improve the overall security situation, notably by restructuring the national defence and security forces and strengthening their operational capacities. The Committee welcomed the contribution of the Central African Multinational Force (FOMUC) of CEMAC to efforts to restore peace and security in the Central African Republic and called for its mandate to be extended beyond 30 June 2007. It urged the international community to provide all necessary support to the Multinational Force and if appropriate, to ECCAS, in order to help the Central African Republic tackle the lack of security in its territory.

The Committee welcomed the decision of the United Nations to deploy an operation to secure the borders of the Central African Republic, Chad and the Sudan and the dispatch in this connection of a multidisciplinary technical assessment mission to the region.

It expressed concern at the steady deterioration of the humanitarian and human rights situation in the Central African Republic as a result of the insecurity caused by armed rebel movements and retaliatory actions by the Central African armed forces.

In the socio-economic sphere, the Committee appealed to bilateral and multilateral donors and international financial institutions to pay special attention to the economic and financial situation of the Central African Republic and to provide it with the necessary support.

(iii) Democratic Republic of the Congo

The Committee welcomed the significant progress made in the implementation of the transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including the successful completion of the electoral process with the peaceful holding of the presidential election and the legislative, provincial and senatorial elections. It applauded the political, financial, technical and logistical efforts made by the international community in that regard and congratulated the Congolese people on their maturity and sense of civic responsibility.

The Committee deplored the deadly clashes that had taken place from 22 to 24 March 2007 in Kinshasa between guards of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) assigned to protect former Vice-President Jean-Pierre Bemba and the other FARDC soldiers, which had resulted in numerous civilian and military victims. It urged the country's political leaders to give priority to conciliation and harmony in the best interests of the Congolese people.

The Committee expressed concern at the continued precarious security situation in some provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and northern Katanga.

It condemned the acts of violence that had occurred in Bas-Congo, causing many civilian and military victims. It also regretted the resistance to *brassage* of armed groups in FARDC in the eastern part of the country.

It welcomed the *mixage* of General Laurent Nkunda's forces with FARDC in North Kivu and called for continued efforts towards a complete *brassage* of those forces.

The Committee expressed concern at the weak operational capacities of FARDC in the light of the scale of security problems in the country and called on the international community to provide urgent assistance to the Government in the implementation of reform of the security sector with a view to the establishment of well-managed professional security agencies that showed due respect for the law and human rights.

The Committee urged the political leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the opposition parties to respect the principles of transparency, openness and tolerance and to avoid the use of violence.

The Committee expressed concern at the persistence of allegations of serious violations of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It welcomed the measures taken by the authorities to combat impunity and urged them to pursue such measures, ensuring that everyone guilty of such violations was, without distinction, prosecuted.

The Committee also expressed deep concern at the scale of the humanitarian crisis in the country and urged donors to provide substantial assistance to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enable it to deal with the situation.

(iv) Republic of Chad

The Committee expressed deep concern at the multiple destabilization attempts against Chad owing to repeated attacks by rebel groups based in Darfur and abuse perpetrated by militias against the civilian population.

It nevertheless welcomed some signs of progress in the situation in Chad, including:

(a) The conclusion of peace agreements between the Government of Chad and some factions of the political-military opposition and the consequent integration into the February 2007 Government of senior officials of that opposition;

(b) The continuation of diplomatic activity to defuse the crisis between Chad and the Sudan;

(c) The efforts made to relaunch the process relating to the Tripoli Agreement of 8 February 2006 on the normalization of relations between Chad and the Sudan;

(d) The signature on 2 May 2007 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, of a peace agreement between Chad and the Sudan.

The Committee expressed deep concern at the multifaceted humanitarian crisis in eastern and southern Chad, with multiple acts of abuse against Sudanese and Central African refugees and persons displaced by the Janjaweed militias.

It condemned the grave human rights violations perpetrated against refugees, displaced persons, civilian populations and humanitarian workers in eastern Chad. It appealed to the international community and the United Nations to help the Government of Chad ensure the safety of refugees from Darfur living in camps in Chad, provide greater assistance to them and guarantee the camps' neutrality.

It welcomed in this regard the dispatch to the region by the Secretary-General of the United Nations of two assessment missions to prepare the expected deployment of a multidisciplinary United Nations presence in the area pursuant to Security Council resolution 1706 (2006).

V. Consideration of the situation in Darfur and its impact on countries members of the Committee

The Committee noted with profound concern information about the deterioration of the situation in Darfur and its far-reaching consequences for regional security, including:

(a) The influx of refugees and the deteriorating security situation in countries of the region;

(b) The growth of illegal cross-border movements of weapons and persons;

(c) The worsening environmental and security situation in areas close to the border, which seriously endangered civilians, displaced persons and refugees;

(d) The threats to the stability, security and territorial integrity of the Sudan's neighbours, particularly the Central African Republic and the Republic of Chad;

(e) The growing risk that the area where the three countries' borders met would become an area of unrest and a favourite haven of mercenaries, armed groups and rebels ready to take part in any action to destabilize the countries of the subregion.

The Committee appealed to the international community to increase its efforts to ensure that the borders between Chad, the Central African Republic and the Sudan were properly secured and that assistance to refugees and displaced persons, the main victims of hostilities in the region, was increased.

VI. Developments relating to the security in the Great Lakes region

At the subregional level and within the framework of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission (Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda), the Committee encouraged the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of Burundi and the Republic of Uganda to continue their efforts to cooperate more closely in combating the armed groups on their common borders.

It welcomed the strengthened cooperation between the Republic of Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Burundi and the consequent improvement in the security situation in the Great Lakes region.

It noted with interest the information provided in this connection on the activities of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission, the relaunch of the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL), the signature of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region and the regular exchange of high-level delegations between the countries of the Tripartite Plus Joint Commission for the discussion of bilateral and subregional matters.

VII. Inter-State security cooperation among the Central African countries

(i) Report on preparations for the Bahr-el-Gazal joint military exercise (November 2007)

The Committee noted with interest the information provided to the ECCAS secretariat on the status of preparations for the Bahr-el-Gazal joint military exercise. It welcomed the assurances given to the Secretary-General of ECCAS by the Government of Chad regarding the deadline of November 2007 for holding the exercise.

(ii) Measures to combat cross-border crime

The Committee expressed profound concern at the persistence of border security problems in the subregion, including cross-border crime. It encouraged member countries to devise appropriate responses, particularly in the context of a concerted subregional approach the terms of which could be considered at the planned subregional conference.

The Committee took note of the information communicated by the Republic of Angola on the recent adoption of a law governing the conditions under which aliens might be present in that country.

(iii) Briefing on the conclusions of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) Seminar on Cross-border Security Problems

The Committee took note of the information communicated by the Office for Disarmament Affairs regarding the Seminar on Cross-border Security Problems planned within the framework of CEMAC, under the aegis of the Department of Political Affairs.

It also took note of the fact that the Seminar had not been held on the dates proposed, and it reiterated its wish to be informed of the Seminar's conclusions in order to consider ways of extending to ECCAS the security framework that would be suggested.

(iv) Consideration of the project for a subregional conference on cross-border security problems

The Committee discussed the project for a subregional conference on cross-border security problems which had been adopted by the twenty-fourth ministerial meeting in Kigali in 2007.

It took note of the information provided by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on the primary responsibility of the Department of Political Affairs in this matter and on the financial constraints which had hampered the convening of the conference owing to the lack of available resources in the trust fund.

The Committee nevertheless emphasized the scale of the cross-border security problems in Central Africa and the consequent risks the peace, security, stability and development of the countries of the subregion. It therefore decided that the conference should be organized during the next regular ministerial meeting, to be held in Yaoundé from 3 to 7 September 2007, to compensate for the lack of resources in the trust fund.

The ECCAS secretariat was authorized, through its relationship with the United Nations, to receive the funds required to cover the additional cost of organizing the conference.

VIII. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa

(i) Reports on the implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities for the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

The Committee took note with interest of the reports submitted by the member countries on the execution of the Programme of Priority Activities adopted at the end of the Brazzaville seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the

United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The Committee also took note of the reports submitted by the member countries on the implementation of the programmes for the disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and full socio-economic reintegration of former combatants. It welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the programmes. It encouraged the countries concerned to continue their efforts in that area and to be guided by their respective experiences.

The Committee emphasized the importance of the prompt and full implementation of the Programme of Priority Activities adopted in Brazzaville in 2003 and urged the member countries to make the necessary efforts in this respect to establish in Central Africa a small-arms-and-nuclear-weapons-free zone.

The Committee urged the member countries to redouble their efforts in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at the national and subregional levels and appealed to the international community to provide the countries of the subregion with the necessary support for effectively combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

(ii) Relationship between the Programme of Priority Activities and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region

The Committee emphasized the similarity of the concerns expressed in the Programme of Priority Activities, adopted in 2003 in Brazzaville following the seminar on the implementation in Central Africa of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, adopted on 16 December 2006 in Nairobi.

It welcomed the fact that many of the measures advocated in the Pact overlapped with those in the Programme of Priority Activities, including:

- The institution of development border basins and the promotion of human security in the region;
- The disarmament and repatriation of all the armed groups in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- The disarming of armed nomadic herdsman;
- The promotion of common policies to end the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons;
- Mine clearance and mine action in the region.

(iii) Participation by ECCAS in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and in the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures

The Committee took note of the briefing by the ECCAS secretariat on the participation of member countries in the United Nations Register of Conventional Weapons and the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures.

It deplored the fact that only eight of the countries of the subregion participated in the Register and none participated in the standardized instrument for

reporting military expenditures. It again urged them to participate in those two important instruments, which contribute to the promotion of peace, security and stability through transparency in arms flows and military expenditures.

(iv) Project for the drafting of a legal instrument on small arms and light weapons control in Central Africa

The Committee took note with interest of the briefing by the ECCAS secretariat and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on the project for the drafting of a legal instrument on small arms and light weapons control in Central Africa.

It reaffirmed its support for the process and stressed the need to provide the region with a binding legal instrument that would take due account of the specific requirements of the member countries and their diverse concerns and experiences in this regard.

The Committee welcomed the partnership entered into by the ECCAS secretariat and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, in particular the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, and encouraged them to conclude at an early date a memorandum of understanding on cooperation between the two institutions.

The Committee expressed the hope that work on drafting the legal instrument would begin as soon as possible.

(v) Project for the drafting to a code of conduct for defence and security forces in Central Africa

The Committee took note with interest of the briefing by the ECCAS secretariat and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on the project for the drafting of a code of conduct for defence and security forces in Central Africa specifically tailored to the geopolitical situation and security requirements of the subregion.

It stressed the importance of such an instrument, which would enhance the professionalism and sense of responsibility of the defence and security forces vis-à-vis the State and the citizenry and would build capacity in the areas of civic education, respect for human rights and international humanitarian law.

The Committee urged the two institutions to conclude a memorandum of understanding to enable work on drafting the code of conduct to proceed.

(vi) Implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in Central Africa

The Committee took note of the briefing by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs on the implementation in Central Africa of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), adopted on 28 April 2004, which highlighted the danger of terrorism and trafficking in nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their vectors. It welcomed the participation of some of the members of the Committee in the seminar on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa, which had been held on 9 and 10 November 2006 in Accra, Ghana, with the support of the Regional Centre.

It encouraged the countries that had not participated in the Accra seminar to take an active part in the second seminar on the subject, which the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs was intending to organize in Africa in 2007.

IX. Report by the ECCAS secretariat on the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms (strengthening of the Supreme Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), status of the ratifications of the Protocol on COPAX, operationalization of MARAC)

The Committee took note of the report by the ECCAS secretariat on the principal ECCAS activities in the human integration, peace, security and stability sectors.

It welcomed the progress made in the institutional evolution of the subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, in particular:

- The ongoing operationalization of the Central African Early Warning System (MARAC), with the recruitment of the officials required for starting its activities and the organization, thanks to the support of the European Union, of a seminar for training newly recruited personnel, the participants which included officials from the early warning systems of the African Union, ECOWAS, and the Conflict Settlement Centre of the University of Cape Town, South Africa;
- The establishment of the Directorate of Political and Diplomatic Actions, responsible for supporting member States in the implementation of peace and security instruments;
- The rise in importance of the ECCAS regional military staff headquarters owing to the study on the training system for military personnel in Central Africa, the organization of a seminar on the logistics of the Central African Multinational Force and the training of ECCAS forces within the framework of the SAWA 2006 exercise and the course on familiarization with equatorial forest conditions organized in Libreville in April 2007.

The Committee commended the strengthening of the ECCAS secretariat's role in the observation of elections in Central Africa, including:

- The observation in 2006 of the presidential elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe and of the legislative elections in the Gabonese Republic;
- The organization of exploratory missions in the Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Cameroon and the Republic of Angola, with a view to the observation in those countries of elections planned for 2007 and 2008;
- The preparation of an observer's guide, to be submitted for approval to the Conference of Heads of State and Government, to be held in Brazzaville in June 2007.

The Committee commended the efforts made by ECCAS in the implementation of subregional peace and security mechanisms established under the aegis of the Committee and encouraged it to continue this work.

The Committee took note of the goal which ECCAS had set for itself of bringing all its instruments to maturity by 2010, which would enable it to assume its full role in the area of peace and security.

It welcomed the dynamic cooperation between ECCAS and the various multilateral partners, including the forthcoming signature of a memorandum of understanding between the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the ECCAS secretariat, which would serve as a framework for the joint preparation of specific projects.

X. Exchange of views on methods of work and the programme of work: revitalization and stabilization activities

The members of the Committee exchanged views on the question of revitalization of the Committee's activities and rationalization of its methods of work. It commended the regular organization by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs of consultations with the Permanent Representatives of States members of the Committee to the United Nations. It also took note of the briefing delivered by Ms. Marcaillou to the Security Council on behalf of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. It welcomed those actions, which increased the Committee's visibility and gave new impetus to its work.

It considered various innovative approaches for its meetings, including the possibility of devoting a whole meeting to a specific subject that was of particular importance or urgent in character.

The Committee advocated strengthened interactions between ECCAS and other subregional organizations through the invitation of the latter, if necessary, to meetings organized under the aegis of the Committee and ECCAS, and vice versa.

The Committee welcomed the appointment of Mr. Ivor Richard Fung, Director of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, as Secretary of the Committee and assured him of its wholehearted support for his work.

The Committee expressed deep concern at the lack of available resources in the trust fund intended for the financing of extrabudgetary activities. In that regard, it appealed to members and donors to contribute to the trust fund.

XI. Date and place of the next meeting

Pursuant to the decision taken at the twenty-fourth ministerial meeting in Kigali to the effect that, in case of the withdrawal of a State, an alternative solution would be to hold the meeting in Yaoundé (A/61/502, para. 55), and in the light of the statement of the Republic of Angola not to hold the twenty-sixth meeting on the dates scheduled, the Republic of Cameroon agreed to host the twenty-sixth meeting from 3 to 7 September 2007. The Republic of Angola undertook to host the twenty-seventh meeting in February 2008.

XII. Other matters

The Committee welcomed the information provided by the delegation of the Republic of the Congo regarding the appointment of H.E. Mr. Rodolphe Adada, Minister of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Francophonie of the Republic of the Congo, as United Nations-African Union Joint Special Representative in Darfur.

It took note with interest of the information on the briefing relating to the Committee's activities which was given by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs to the Security Council Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, at the request of the Republic of the Congo, Chairman of the Working Group.

XIII. Adoption of the report of the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting

The Committee adopted the present report on 18 May 2007.

The closing statement was made by H.E. Mr. Carlos Gustavo dos Anjos, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities.

The following expression of thanks was read out:

"We, the representatives of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, assembled for the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting held from 14 to 18 May 2007 in Sao Tome, Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe,

"Reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of peace, security and stability, deeply cherished by our respective peoples, and to the socio-economic development of our subregion;

"Commend the individual and collective efforts of our countries to achieve peace, security, stability and development;

"Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust which has prevailed throughout our work;

"Express our thanks and deep gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Fradique Bandeira Melo de Menezes, President of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, and to the Government and people of Sao Tome and Principe for the warm welcome and fraternal hospitality we have received during our stay in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe."

Done at Sao Tome on 18 May 2007

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
29 June 2007

Original: English

Russian Federation: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling all its previous relevant resolutions,

Recalling also the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Annexes thereto (collectively the Peace Agreement, S/1995/999, Annex), and the conclusions of the Peace Implementation Conferences held in Bonn on 9 and 10 December 1997 (S/1997/979, Annex), Madrid on 16 and 17 December 1998 (S/1999/139, appendix) and Brussels on 23 and 24 May 2000 (S/2000/586, Annex) as well as the Declaration by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council on 19 June 2007,

1. *Welcomes* and agrees to the designation by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council on 19 June 2007 of Mr. Miroslav Lajčák as High Representative in succession to Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling;
 2. *Pays tribute* to the efforts of Mr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling in his work as High Representative;
 3. *Reaffirms* the importance it attaches to the role of the High Representative in pursuing the implementation of the Peace Agreement and giving guidance to and coordinating the activities of the civilian organizations and agencies involved in assisting the parties to implement the Peace Agreement;
 4. *Reaffirms also* the final authority of the High Representative in theatre regarding the interpretation of Annex 10 on civilian implementation of the Peace Agreement;
 5. *Takes note* of the decision of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council on 19 June 2007 that the Office of the High Representative will remain in place and continue to carry out its mandate and that the aim is closure of the Office of the High Representative by 30 June 2008;
 6. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.
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Security Council

Distr.: General
29 June 2007

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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 1999, by which the Council decided to establish the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and requested the Secretary-General to report at regular intervals on the implementation of the mandate. It covers the activities of UNMIK and developments in Kosovo (Serbia) from 19 February to 1 June 2007.

II. Political assessment

2. On 2 February, my Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, submitted a draft comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo status settlement to the political leaderships in Belgrade and Prishtinë/Prishtina. My Special Envoy and his team then held further, intensive consultations with Belgrade and Prishtinë/Prishtina from 21 February to 2 March. A meeting of the Serbian and Kosovo leaders was held on 10 March in Vienna to discuss the settlement proposal, at which the parties were unable to make any additional progress. Following this meeting, my Special Envoy presented me with his report on Kosovo's future status (S/2007/168), containing his recommendation of independence for Kosovo supervised initially by the international community, and his settlement proposal (S/2007/168/Add.1). On 26 March, I conveyed both his future status report and his settlement proposal to the Security Council, with my full support.

3. Following my Special Envoy's briefing to the Security Council on his future status report and settlement proposal on 3 April, the Council undertook a mission to Kosovo and Belgrade from 25 to 28 April. The objective of the mission was to gain first-hand information on progress made in Kosovo since the adoption of resolution 1244 (1999). The Council met with the leaders of Serbia and of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, with representatives of Kosovo's ethnic minority communities and with my Special Representative, Joachim Rucker, and UNMIK staff. A comprehensive and balanced programme enabled the Security Council to further its understanding of the political, social and economic situation in Kosovo, as reflected in the report of the mission (S/2007/256).

Political situation

4. The future status of Kosovo continued to be the main political issue for Kosovo's political establishment and for representatives of all of its communities throughout the reporting period. Expectations remained high among Kosovo Albanians that Kosovo would become independent in the near future. The Kosovo unity team, which represents Kosovo Albanian political parties from both the Government and the opposition, continued its work in three priority areas. It participated in the negotiations held in Vienna with the Belgrade negotiating team; it continued its outreach activities to all of Kosovo's communities to explain the settlement proposal; and it undertook efforts aimed at garnering international support for Kosovo's independence.

5. On 5 April, the Assembly of Kosovo met in an extraordinary session and approved a declaration in support of my Special Envoy's future status report and settlement proposal. No Kosovo Serb member of the Assembly was present at the session. The declaration welcomed the report's recommendation on status, stating that it represented "a fair and balanced solution in accordance with the will of the people of Kosovo". The Assembly also committed itself to full implementation of the settlement proposal, adding that, if endorsed by the Security Council, it would be considered "legally binding" for Kosovo. Assembly members also welcomed, and pledged cooperation with, the future international civilian and security presences envisaged in the settlement proposal. On 14 April, unity team members signed a "declaration" in which they agreed to remain united during the 120-day transition period envisaged in the settlement proposal.

6. Kosovo Serb political leaders continued their near-total political boycott of Kosovo's central institutions, and were encouraged to do so by the authorities in Belgrade. However, a number of Kosovo Serb political actors who seek a more engaged approach entered the political arena in Kosovo. New Kosovo Serb political parties were established, such as the Independent Liberal Party in Graçanicë/Gračanica, some of which advocate that, irrespective of the future status of Kosovo, the Kosovo Serb community should remain in Kosovo and should participate in the future institutions of Kosovo. While these parties are small and have limited influence, this development reflects a growing concern among some Kosovo Serbs that the continued boycott of Kosovo's institutions is counterproductive and does not effectively address their practical needs.

7. It is evident that most Kosovo Albanians look forward to the resolution of Kosovo's status with confidence and anticipation, and that most Kosovo Serbs view this process with apprehension. Although the actual number of serious inter-ethnic incidents during the reporting period has remained low, the political uncertainty surrounding the status determination process continued to have a negative effect on perceptions of security within the Kosovo Serb community. It is also increasingly apparent that issues of common concern, such as unemployment and the state of the economy, are viewed with increasing pessimism by members of all of Kosovo's communities.

Economy

8. The economy in Kosovo showed some signs of continuing improvement. The gross domestic product continued to grow, following an estimated 3 to 4 per cent growth in 2006, while inflation remained close to zero. Exports increased as much

as 40 per cent while Government revenues grew by 13 per cent, a rate which exceeds estimates made by the International Monetary Fund from the beginning of 2007. However, lack of foreign direct investment and access to international loans continues to hamper the Provisional Institutions' ability to effectively combat unemployment. The privatization process continued to move forward. By the end of April 2007, 460 new companies derived from the assets of 282 socially owned enterprises had been tendered for sale as part of the process. Total privatization proceeds amounted to over €303 million.

9. In terms of economic governance, the reporting period saw a number of positive trends. Fiscal management continued to improve, customs collections increased and the banking sector evidenced progressive growth. UNMIK continued to transfer competencies in the economic sector to the Provisional Institutions. With the exception of the Civil Aviation Regulatory Office, all regulatory bodies are currently headed by local professionals. Activities aimed at ensuring the long-term development of the energy sector also continued, including the development of new mines and generation facilities and preparations for the construction of a new thermal power plant.

Security

10. During the reporting period, the overall security situation was calm, with few significant incidents. Rallies organized by the Kosovo Albanian self-determination movement "Vetevendosje" on 3 and 31 March, in protest against the current status determination process, had low attendance and were held peacefully. This stood in sharp contrast to the 10 February demonstration organized by Vetevendosje, during which two protesters were fatally wounded by UNMIK police and which led to the arrest of the movement's leader. This change in the nature of the Vetevendosje demonstrations can be attributed to outreach efforts by UNMIK police and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) with rally organizers, and the continued detention of Vetevendosje's leader, as well as steps forward in the future status process.

11. On 17 April, the international prosecutor in charge of investigating the violence surrounding the 10 February Vetevendosje demonstration issued an interim report stating that there was a substantial basis upon which to conclude that members of the Romanian formed police unit were linked to the incidents. He also concluded that there was insufficient evidence to support a reasonable suspicion as to which Romanian police officers were responsible for firing the shots, and that therefore a judicial investigation could not proceed. On 18 April, the UNMIK Police Commissioner announced that an internal police review had found deficiencies in some areas of operational planning and command and control and indicated that measures had been taken to ensure that the police response to public disorder would be properly managed in the future.

12. The publication of the interim report, as well as the announcement by UNMIK police that an internal review would be undertaken, did much to defuse tensions. The relative calm during the reporting period was also attributable to a perception by the population in Kosovo that, as long as there is a clear forward momentum in the status determination process, there is no need to explicitly support more radical political options promoted by groups such as Vetevendosje.

13. Notwithstanding the general calm that prevailed during the reporting period, there were two high-profile incidents. These included a grenade attack on the Visoki

Dečani monastery in Dečan/Dečani municipality on 30 March, and the attempted assassination on 28 February and 12 April of the head of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency of Kosovo. Though little damage was done to the monastery, the attack was significant as it occurred only a few days after a successful outreach meeting in the municipality, which was attended by my Special Representative, senior officials of the Provisional Institutions, representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and representatives of the Kosovo Liberation Army War Veterans' Association. A suspect was subsequently identified in connection with the attack, but remains at large despite continuing efforts by KPS to locate and apprehend this individual, including public appeals for cooperation in the search. Thanks to swift action by KPS, three suspects were immediately arrested in the case of the assassination attempt on the head of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency on 12 April.

Rule of law

14. Local institutions continued to assume additional responsibilities in the justice field. The Ministry of Justice continued to lead efforts to finalize an agreement with the Ministry of Health on the transfer of responsibility for missing persons and forensics. An memorandum of understanding between UNMIK, the European Union and the United States of America on funding and implementation of the vetting process for judges and prosecutors is under consideration. Consultations between UNMIK and the Kosovo Judicial Council on the allocation of 421 judicial and prosecutorial posts between various courts in Kosovo continued. Recruitment for the Kosovo Special Prosecutor's Office, including of members from minority communities, progressed.

15. Despite these ongoing, progressive steps to strengthen the justice sector, major challenges remain. It is still necessary for international judges and prosecutors to handle the most sensitive cases. The judicial system suffers from inadequate resources. This has a negative impact on the motivation of judges, as well as the recruitment process. To address these concerns, a justice system reform programme continued to work with municipal courts to reduce the backlog of civil cases pending since June 2006.

16. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has also taken on new competencies. It now reviews civil registration and documentation and has nearly completed drafting a police law that establishes the rights and duties of this Ministry and the police and clarifies the institutional relationship between them in line with European standards. The law will be submitted to the Government for approval, following which it is expected to be sent to the Kosovo Assembly for deliberation and then adopted. Participants and stakeholders from other sections of the Government, non-governmental organizations and the international community provided substantial inputs to the law and concur that it meets international and European standards.

17. The Ministry of Internal Affairs made significant progress in establishing the Department of Borders, Boundaries, Asylum and Migration and strengthened its capacity to implement current readmission procedures. Progress was also made in clarifying the chain of command in cases of civil emergency, in converting the Kosovo Police Service School into the Kosovo Centre for Public Safety Education and Development, and in creating an independent professional standards board.

Standards and European integration

18. Work on standards implementation continued to progress within the framework of the European Partnership Action Plan. A technical assessment on progress in the implementation of the standards for Kosovo, prepared by my Special Representative, is contained in the annex to the present report. Standards implementation continues to strengthen Kosovo's institutions and helps to improve the delivery of public services to the people of Kosovo. It is particularly important that the principles underlying the standards have been incorporated into the Action Plan. Fulfilling the requirements of the Action Plan remains a priority for the Kosovo institutions.

Governance

19. The consolidation of Kosovo's government structures continued, especially at the central level through the strengthening of several independent agencies. However, obstacles remained, including in some instances a lack of sufficient capacity and the absence of necessary secondary legislation, as well as insufficient adherence to procedures at the local level. At the central level, the Kosovo Assembly continued to show an increasing tendency to adhere to its rules of procedure and held a number of public hearings and consultations on numerous draft laws. The Central Election Commission continued to build up its capacity in all areas and is expected to take full responsibility for the conduct of the next elections, with the continued support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Transition Working Group on Elections, which includes representatives from both the Government and the opposition, prepared principles for draft legislation on elections. However, the Assembly's appointment of a new Ombudsperson has not progressed.

20. There was progress in the establishment and consolidation of a number of independent agencies in Kosovo. The consolidation of the Independent Media Commission continued; however, the implementation of the law governing the Commission and secondary-level legislation did not progress. The civil service Independent Oversight Board is now running effectively. There is, however, a need to provide for an effective mechanism to enforce its rulings and recommendations and to finalize its establishment as an independent body. The Anti-Corruption Agency became operational. The implementation of an anti-corruption strategy will now depend on the effectiveness of this Agency and its cooperation with the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and the public.

21. The reporting period saw progress in municipal governance through a strengthening of both legislative and administrative structures. All municipalities, including the newly established pilot municipal units, now have rules and procedures that are incorporated into their statutes. Interdepartmental consultation is ensured through a board of directors. In addition, public consultation has become normal practice prior to the adoption of legislation and budget proposals by municipal assemblies. However, the general lack of meaningful consultation with minority communities is a cause for concern. In addition, the struggle between the Democratic League of Kosovo and the breakaway faction Democratic League of Dardania, led by the former President of the Kosovo Assembly, Nexhat Daci, in the key municipalities of Gjilan/Gnjilan, Viti/Vitina and Ferizaj/Uroševac has had

negative consequences. Municipal assemblies in these municipalities have become dysfunctional and the appointment of senior civil servants has been delayed.

Decentralization

22. A transition working group has been established to consider the practical measures necessary to eventually implement the annex to the settlement proposal referring to decentralization. Transfer of responsibilities and capacity-building has continued in the three pilot municipal units of Hani i Elezit/Đeneral Jankovic, Junik and Mamushë/Mamuša. The Kosovo Government has requested the Ministry of Local Government Administration to recommend by 1 July whether pilot municipal units should be converted into fully functional municipalities.

Cultural and religious heritage

23. During much of the reporting period, work on the reconstruction of Serbian Orthodox cultural heritage sites damaged or destroyed during the March 2004 events slowed down significantly. This was mainly due to the paralysis of the Reconstruction Implementation Commission as a result of the non-participation of the representative from Serbia's Institute for the Protection of Monuments. While a new representative was appointed to the Commission by the Serbian Minister of Culture in April, subsequent changes to the Government of Serbia led to a reversal of this appointment. The position needs to be filled before the Commission can recommence work. In an encouraging signal, the Assembly of Bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church reiterated its readiness to cooperate with the Commission and the Council of Europe during its biannual meeting. The European Agency for Reconstruction began work in April on two Serbian Orthodox sites in Prizren under the Commission's mandate.

Returns

24. The number of Kosovo Serb returns remained low. Although conditions for returns have gradually improved, the factors that discourage large-scale return movements continue to exist, such as the lack of employment opportunities, unresolved property disputes and continuing perceptions of insecurity.

25. Despite these challenges, UNMIK and the Provisional Institutions have continued to focus their efforts on strengthening institutional and administrative structures to underpin the process of return. UNMIK continued to transfer competencies to the Ministry of Communities and Returns, which is led by the only Kosovo Serb minister in the Government. Transferred competencies include the coordination of municipal fair-share financing and of the work of municipal returns offices and municipal community offices. UNMIK maintains an advisory role and is building capacity with a focus on senior staff.

26. The Ministry continued to demonstrate a willingness to cooperate closely with UNMIK and the international community. It focused its efforts on supporting organized and individual returns of minorities and developing community development and stabilization projects. Four projects benefiting about 90 families were approved for funding by the Ministry and its partners for 2007, of which two (Berkove/Berkovo (Klinë/a) and Vushtrri/Vucitrn) have been launched; the remaining two will be launched in due course. In addition, two ongoing projects carried over from the 2006 Kosovo consolidated budget, in Lipjan/Lipljan and

Abdullah Presheva/Presevo (Gjilan/Gnjilane), will benefit 45 internally displaced persons.

27. Individual returns have already begun this year. Returns to the Roma settlement in southern Mitrovicë/a began in early March and have now reached a total of 280 persons out of an expected 412. Though small in number, these returns are a highly symbolic breakthrough. They are expected to foster additional return movements, provided that international donor contributions and assistance to the Ministry continue.

Future international arrangements and transition

28. Joint work on transition to the future international presence envisaged in the settlement proposal continued, without prejudice to the outcome of the future status process. This work is carried out by UNMIK, in close collaboration with the planning teams for the envisaged international civilian representative and the European Security and Defence Policy rule of law mission, as well as the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government.

III. Observations

29. I welcome and am encouraged by the continuing commitment to standards implementation shown by the Provisional Institutions of Kosovo throughout the reporting period. There has been concrete progress in many areas of standards, although results in some areas have been mixed and clearly much remains to be done. I call upon Kosovo's leaders and institutions to demonstrate an unambiguous continuing commitment to standards implementation, and to translate this commitment into concrete results.

30. In eight years of interim administration by the United Nations, Kosovo has made significant strides in the establishment and consolidation of democratic and accountable Provisional Institutions of Self-Government and in creating the foundations for a functioning economy. The Provisional Institutions have laid the basis for a peaceful and normal life for all of the people of Kosovo.

31. However, the process of full reconciliation and integration of Kosovo's communities will be a long-term one, and remains an uphill challenge. Further progress in consolidating peaceful coexistence in Kosovo will require firm determination on the part of Kosovo's leaders and a genuine commitment by members of all of its communities.

32. Regrettably, large segments of the Kosovo Serb population continue to feel that Kosovo's Provisional Institutions do not represent them. Kosovo Serbs continue to boycott these institutions at the central level, and instead rely for the most part on parallel structures supported by the authorities in Belgrade for the provision of basic services. At the same time, returns of Kosovo Serbs remain disappointingly low due to uncertain economic prospects and continuing security-related concerns.

33. While Kosovo's overall progress is encouraging, if its future status remains undefined there is a real risk that the progress achieved by the United Nations and the Provisional Institutions in Kosovo can begin to unravel. Sustaining and consolidating the progress made by Kosovo will require concrete prospects for the

conclusion of the future status process and the active and constructive cooperation of all involved.

34. The determination of Kosovo's future status should therefore remain a priority for the Security Council and for the international community as a whole. My Special Envoy's settlement proposal and recommendation on Kosovo's future status contain the right elements for a sustainable solution to Kosovo's future status, including continued international supervision. I welcome the European Union's pledge to play the leading role in the future international presence in Kosovo, as envisaged in the settlement proposal.

35. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to my Special Representative, Joachim Rucker, and to his staff in UNMIK for their dedication and effort to move Kosovo forward. I would also like to extend my thanks to the United Nations partners — KFOR, the European Union and OSCE — and to the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other contributors for their support.

Annex I

Technical assessment of progress in implementation of the standards for Kosovo

Prepared by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo, 12 June 2007

1. The status settlement process continued to dominate the reporting period. Nevertheless, normal standards implementation work also continued, increasingly with its own momentum and with the Agency for European Integration in the lead.
2. Implementation also continued of the remaining items in the programme of 13 priority points presented to the Kosovo Government by the Contact Group in June 2006.

Functioning democratic institutions

3. There were no serious violations of the Kosovo Assembly rules of procedure during the reporting period. Monitoring of the Assembly has shown an increased number of plenary debates, public hearings, interpellations and consultations, with comments received on numerous draft laws. The Assembly has also strengthened the scrutiny of its budgetary expenditures.
4. In 2007 the Committee on Rights and Interests of Communities of the Kosovo Assembly has held 11 meetings and reviewed 10 amendments to draft laws, returning one draft law to the functional committee for review. However, the Committee did not forward any amendment for the Assembly's consideration. The problems faced by the Committee relate to internal political divisions, a low level of communication with the Assembly and a lack of concrete initiatives from Committee members.
5. The split in the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and the establishment of the Democratic League of Dardania (LDD) have reduced the majority that the former enjoyed in many municipal assemblies. This has impaired the functioning of a number of assemblies, such as those of Kamenicë/a and Gjiilan/Gnjilane, and has affected the tenure of members of the board of directors, including some chief executive officers (Lipjan/Lipljan). Six former LDK members formed their own LDD parliamentary group, but no difficulties have been noted in the functioning of the Assembly and the Government at the central level.
6. Representatives of the Serb List for Kosovo and Metohija (SLKM) continued their boycott of the Assembly and were joined in January by another elected Kosovo Serb representative, thus reducing the number of Kosovo Serbs participating in the Assembly to one. Eight other Kosovo Serb representatives participate in the work of the Assembly committees, but do not sit in the Assembly.
7. Against a background of budgetary constraints and pressure from the Government of Serbia, the participation of Kosovo Serbs in the civil service has not shown any significant improvement. In the central institutions, 11 per cent of civil servants come from minority communities, against a target of 16.6 per cent. Though incomplete, the statistics at the municipal level show that minority employment constitutes about 12 per cent of the total. (Because of the declared non-cooperation

policy of the three Serb-run northern municipalities and the administration in northern Mitrovicë/a, these figures are incomplete for the municipalities.)

8. Two hundred Kosovo Serb civil servants, who had withdrawn from the Provisional Institutions' payroll following a directive from Serbian authorities to choose between the payrolls of the Serbian and Kosovo Governments, have requested reinstatement, and have received their accumulated salaries. The Kosovo Government continues to hold in trust the salaries of all remaining Kosovo Serbs who have left the Provisional Institutions' payroll (€4,910,810 remains in escrow while €237,584 has been paid out to those reinstated).

9. On 24 March, the Kosovo Government adopted a public administration reform strategy together with an action plan for its implementation. The total budget required for its implementation in 2007 amounts to some €6.5 million. Of this amount, €1.2 million has been allocated from the Kosovo budget, donors have provided €3 million, and the rest still needs to be found.

10. Women constitute 35.7 per cent of the civil service, but remain seriously underrepresented at the senior level. There are only 193 women, compared to 937 men, in senior posts at the central level, with only one minister and one permanent secretary who are women. There are only 56 women, compared to 731 men, at the municipal level, with only two chief executive officer posts occupied by women.

11. To address this discrepancy the Prime Minister declared 2007 the Year of Affirmative Action for Women in Kosovo. The Provisional Institutions issued an administrative instruction which promotes preferential treatment for the employment of women in the civil service. All municipalities have gender equality officers and so far 20 municipalities have committees for gender equality.

12. The Independent Oversight Board and the Senior Public Appointments Committee are now functioning normally. The Office of the Prime Minister has established a commission to oversee the transformation of the Independent Oversight Board into an independent body which reports directly to the Assembly.

13. The Anti-Corruption Agency has been operational since 1 February. The public has since started to contact the Agency and several corruption cases have been brought to the attention of police and the judiciary. The implementation of the anti-corruption strategy will now depend on the effectiveness of this Agency and the collaboration it obtains from the Provisional Institutions and the public. Of the 732 senior officials at the central level, 712 have declared their properties and assets in accordance with the anti-corruption law. Ministries have yet to appoint vigilance officers to implement the anti-corruption action plan.

14. The implementation of the law on languages continued with the adoption of administrative instructions setting out the composition and competencies of the Language Commission and the administrative sanctions to be imposed in cases of violation. The Municipal Assembly of Mitrovicë/a has adopted Turkish for official use and similar decisions are expected in other municipalities including Prishtinë/Priština.

15. The Ministry of Public Services and the Ministry of Local Government Administration continue to monitor language compliance at the central and local levels respectively. The Kosovo Institute for Public Administration is conducting

training sessions for approximately 60 interpreters and translators. Except in the Serb-run northern municipalities and the mono-ethnic Kosovo Albanian municipalities, signs outside municipal buildings generally appear in all official languages. However, defacing of place names on road signs is quite common; officials usually take corrective action only at the behest of UNMIK.

16. Of the 117 licensed broadcasters, 42 broadcast in minority languages (34 in Serbian, four in Bosnian, two in Turkish, one in Gorani and one in Roma). Twelve radio stations, most of them broadcasting in the Serbian language, have a weekly programme in the Roma language.

17. Radio Television Kosovo broadcasts 16.4 per cent of its television programming and 12.5 per cent of its radio programming in minority community languages. Of the total television news programming, 20.7 per cent is in minority community languages.

18. Journalists and editors are increasingly adhering to the Press Council's code of conduct and its statute. As of 6 June, the Press Council had received a total of 38 complaints, 26 of which had been adjudicated.

Functioning democratic institutions: challenges ahead

19. The existing administrative instruction on the composition and competences of the Language Commission needs to be revised to ensure adequate minority participation.

20. Existing gender structures need adequate support and should be fully involved in decision-making processes and selection of personnel. The long-term strategy to increase the number and improve the position of women in the Provisional Institutions should be further implemented at both central and local levels.

21. There should be no further delay in the appointment of an Ombudsperson in accordance with the amended regulation on the ombudsperson institution in Kosovo. Amended rules of procedure need to be adopted before the summer recess and a new call for applications should be issued immediately.

22. The Minority Media Fund should continue its operation with a new round of grants. Radio Television Kosovo should transfer 5 per cent of the 2006 and 2007 broadcast fee to the Minority Media Fund.

23. The implementation of the Independent Media Commission Law needs to be expedited, including the allocation of adequate resources. However, the amounts set by the adopted license fee regulation for broadcasters could pose a heavy financial burden for stations, particularly those serving minority communities.

Rule of law

24. As of 2 April, the Police Task Force, established in April 2006 to investigate March 2004 cases (a Contact Group priority), had investigated 1,526 cases, of which 754 were under review, 177 remained open, 315 were closed, 120 were under active investigation and 160 were being investigated by the Kosovo Police Service (KPS).

25. International prosecutors have indicted 36 people for the most serious March riot-related offences, resulting in 26 convictions and one acquittal. Nine defendants in three cases are awaiting trial. Local prosecutors have brought over 300 criminal

charges resulting in 142 convictions, with another 22 persons currently under investigation.

26. A memorandum of understanding between the European Union, UNMIK and the United States on the funding and implementation of the reappointment of judges and prosecutors is under review. The Kosovo Judicial Council approved on 20 March the new allocation of 326 judicial positions for the supreme, district, municipal and minor offences courts. A number of judicial staff have been transferred from low-volume to high-volume courts as part of this process. The Ministry of Justice plans to complete its new allocation of the prosecutorial positions by the end of June.

27. A strategy to identify and reduce current civil case backlogs (including those related to property cases) and to prevent future backlogs was developed in February by a group of international and local stakeholders.

28. Legislation on witness protection is still awaiting finalization. With United Kingdom and United States support, all district courts are now equipped with a witness protection system that will improve the ability of the Kosovo justice system to conduct investigations and prosecutions in a variety of sensitive cases with protected witnesses.

29. The Kosovo Special Prosecutor's Office is operational. Six special prosecutors are now in place, including one woman and one member of an ethnic minority group.

30. In March, an additional police substation was established for Roma returnees to the Roma settlement in Mitrovicë/a, raising the number of existing substations to 18. An additional nine substations are under consideration.

31. Minority representation within KPS remained constant at 16 per cent (10.3 per cent Kosovo Serbs) and in the Kosovo Corrections Service (KCS) at 14.4 per cent (10.3 per cent Kosovo Serbs). Female representation stands at 13.6 per cent for KPS and 17.4 for KCS.

32. A memorandum of understanding on the transfer of competencies covering the civil status registry from the Ministry of Public Service to the Ministry of Internal Affairs was signed on 4 April. Minority representation in the Ministry of Internal Affairs is 9.8 per cent (7.2 per cent Kosovo Serbs). There are still 53 vacancies out of 779 posts. Forty per cent of posts are occupied by women.

33. Minority representation of judges and prosecutors is at 8.9 per cent (4.2 per cent Kosovo Serbs) and 9.1 per cent (3 per cent Kosovo Serbs) respectively. Women's representation is at 26.8 per cent for judges and 20.5 per cent for prosecutors. Minority representation in the Ministry of Justice, including KCS, prosecutors and their support staff, is currently at 13.2 per cent (9 per cent Kosovo Serbs).

Rule of law: challenges ahead

34. Further work is needed to effectively protect witnesses from intimidation.

35. Efforts to increase the number of judges and prosecutors from underrepresented communities and to increase minority recruits within the Ministry of Internal Affairs need to continue.

36. The Kosovo Judicial Council needs to proceed with the restructuring and rationalization of the court system. A first step would be to reduce the number of judges assigned to the lowest volume courts. Similarly, the Ministry of Justice needs to restructure the 95 prosecutorial posts.

37. The Kosovo Judicial Council needs to institute stronger accountability mechanisms and to tighten its supervision over court administration. An effective coordination mechanism between the Council and the Ministry of Justice is needed.

Freedom of movement

38. No crime related to freedom of movement was reported during the reporting period. However, some Kosovo Serbs continue to express concerns over the security situation and some members of all communities continue to limit their movements to areas where they are in the majority.

39. On 6 May, some 400 Serbs from Prizren and other parts of Kosovo, currently displaced in Serbia, visited the village of Gornjasellë/Gornje Selo (Prizren) for the annual celebration of St. George. On 7 May, some 280 Serbian children from various parts of Kosovo, including Shtërpçë/Štrpce, Graçanicë/Gračanica and Partesh/Parteš, attended an annual children's folklore music festival in Zubin Potok.

40. Beneficiaries of the humanitarian transport programme, which was handed over to the Government on 1 January, continue to use it in great numbers.

Freedom of movement: challenges ahead

41. Even though KPS surveys suggest that individuals from minority communities have a positive perception of their freedom of movement, the Government needs to continue to condemn inter-ethnic crimes and identify new ways to address the security concerns of minority communities.

Sustainable returns and the rights of communities and their members

42. Restructuring of the Ministry of Communities and Returns (MCR) is ongoing and Minister Grbić continues to build constructive relationships with all stakeholders. As a result, the Ministry is taking an increasing leadership role in the returns process, including participation in municipal working groups and direct project implementation.

43. Five organized return projects, costing €3.2 million, for the return of 120 minority families have been launched in 2007 in Lipjan/Lipljan, Gjiilan/Gnjilane, Vushtrri/Vučitrn, Klinë/a and Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje. While additional projects continue to be developed at the municipal level, funding remains the most important obstacle to returns. The Ministry of Communities and Returns has approved 47 community development and stabilization projects worth €2.08 million to facilitate integration of all communities in Kosovo.

44. The first 69 families have returned to the Roma settlement in Mitrovicë/a and construction is under way to accommodate 24 more families.

45. The Government has assessed all outstanding compensation cases for commercial properties damaged or destroyed during March 2004 (a Contact Group priority) and the funds have been transferred to the beneficiaries.

46. Compliance with fair-share financing quotas and with the administrative instruction issued by the Ministry of Finance and Economy on the administration of fair-share financing by municipalities has improved. Of the 24 municipalities south of the Ibar River, only three failed to comply with the 2006 targets.

47. An administrative instruction defining the competencies of human rights units in the ministries was adopted by the Government on 28 February. This administrative instruction adds the monitoring of implementation of recommendations of the Ombudsperson to the units' responsibilities. The units comprise three to seven staff members covering gender, the rights of minorities, equal opportunities, anti-discrimination, children's rights, anti-trafficking and the rights of persons with disabilities.

48. The draft readmission policy and procedures for repatriation of refugees to Kosovo were finalized on 10 May and submitted to the Government for approval. The reintegration strategy for repatriated persons is to be finalized soon.

Sustainable returns and the rights of communities and their members: challenges ahead

49. Despite the existence of an anti-discrimination law, a comprehensive implementation plan and an administrative instruction to implement the law, little has been done. There is still no comprehensive mechanism for tracking discrimination cases, and ministries have not been tasked with specific duties for its implementation.

50. The Government needs to continue to build capacity to implement its repatriation responsibilities. A comprehensive action plan and monitoring mechanisms should be put in place.

51. The Prishtinë/Priština Municipal Assembly needs to allocate land for the Novi Badovac II/Badoci i Ri II project. The returns project has been coordinated with Belgrade and approved by the municipal working group and the relevant municipal committee.

Economy

52. The draft law to amend the law on public procurement (a Contact Group priority) was adopted by the Assembly on 8 February and promulgated on 13 June.

53. Fourteen of the 30 municipalities audited last year by the Office of the Auditor General have been revisited to determine whether they adopted the mandatory action plans to address the audit findings. Of the 14, three have already implemented their action plans, seven are in the process of doing so and four have not demonstrated any progress. The remaining 16 municipalities will be visited in the coming months.

54. The Board of the Kosovo Trust Agency has approved the launching of the twenty-seventh wave of privatization. By the end of May, 476 new companies derived from the assets of 287 socially owned enterprises had been tendered for sale. Two hundred and seventy-seven sales contracts had been signed, with an additional 127 pending signature. Total privatization proceeds amounted to €310,411,684. The Board had approved a total of 90 liquidations. The estimated value of liquidation sales contracts signed amounted to €2,036,837, and of contracts

pending to €2,260,405. The 20 per cent of privatization proceeds to be paid out to the eligible former workers of privatized enterprises stood at €62,082,337, of which €11,784,115 had already been paid to the Independent Union of Trade Unions of Kosovo, which disburses the funds to the workers.

55. There were no reports of unauthorized annexing of socially owned enterprises' property by municipalities during the reporting period. Following the issuance of criteria under which municipalities may seek to obtain plots of land under the auspices of the public good, several land swaps have been proposed and approved. Prizren is the only municipality to have surrendered land previously annexed without authorization; it returned the property of four socially owned enterprises and of two publicly owned enterprises.

56. The incorporation of the water enterprises is proceeding well; the incorporation of the waste and irrigation enterprises commenced in March.

57. On 12 June, the Economic and Fiscal Council endorsed the expenditure ceilings for the 2008 budget, amounting to €852 million. This represents an increase of 17 per cent compared to 2007. The medium-term expenditure framework was approved by the Government at the beginning of June.

58. The Tax Administration of Kosovo first quarter report shows that tax receipts are nearly 2 per cent ahead of budget projections, and 16 per cent higher compared to the same period in 2006.

59. Revenue collection figures for the Kosovo Energy Corporation for the first quarter of 2007 show overall progress compared to the same period in 2006. The billing of supplied energy increased from 47 to 62 per cent. Although revenue collection on bills decreased from 75 to 67 per cent, revenue collected against energy supplied increased from 35 to 42 per cent, so that the Corporation collected a greater amount of revenue in 2007.

Economy: challenges ahead

60. Audit recommendations need to be better implemented, including by the municipalities audited last year.

61. The Government should systematically consider the costs of legislation when drafting it. The Provisional Institutions need to make improvements in enacting subsidiary legislation and complying with the deadlines envisaged for the adoption of secondary acts.

62. Serious concerns remain about the quality, coverage and timeliness of economic statistics in Kosovo, despite substantial international technical assistance.

63. Revenue collection remains a challenge for the Kosovo Energy Corporation and other public utilities; further efforts are necessary to achieve progress.

Property rights

64. The law on expropriation, the law on arbitration and amendments to the law on cadastre have been approved and are pending promulgation. The law on real rights, a priority for the Government, is still under revision by the Assembly. The draft law on housing and the draft law on the treatment of illegal construction are awaiting

adoption by the Assembly. The draft law on the organization of cadastral institutions has been discussed with the municipalities and will be presented to the Assembly.

65. On 6 June, the Housing and Property Claims Commission was officially replaced by the new Kosovo Property Claims Commission, which has adjudicated in the first instance all 29,160 cases it received. Of these, 368 claims still need to be implemented (a Contact Group priority). Implementation of the rental scheme for illegally occupied properties continues (a Contact Group priority). To date, 2,546 property right holders have included their property in the scheme. Three hundred and ninety-two properties have been rented and €118,248 collected.

66. The Kosovo Property Agency has received 23,343 claims covering agricultural (90.5 per cent), commercial (3.2 per cent) and residential properties (6.3 per cent). Nine hundred and fifty-five cases were brought before the Kosovo Property Claims Commission at its first session, held on 4 and 5 June. First claims including 4,551 agricultural properties, 360 residential properties and 296 commercial properties have been published to enable persons with potential legal interests to become parties to the claim.

67. A strategy to reduce backlog of property cases in courts, drafted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, was completed and circulated for comments in April.

Property rights: challenges ahead

68. Courts need clear guidance on the mandate of the Kosovo Property Agency over conflict-related property claims, and on the final binding force of all decisions of the Housing and Property Claims Commission, in order not to pass judgement on cases within the jurisdiction of the former or those already decided by the latter.

69. The Kosovo Property Agency needs to ensure that displaced persons belonging to the Kosovo Roma and other vulnerable groups are aware of the claims process and have effective access to it.

70. Concerns remain over the proper implementation of expropriations by Kosovo institutions, and the proper implementation of demolitions.

71. Spatial plans for special zones deemed of particular cultural and environmental value need to be prepared, drafted and implemented before further urbanization projects are launched.

72. The action plan on informal settlements needs to be drafted and implemented.

73. The strategy to reduce judicial property backlogs needs to be implemented.

Cultural heritage

74. The Reconstruction Implementation Commission held its only 2007 meeting thus far in January and agreed to make further interventions on six of the seven sites undergoing work in 2006, as well as another 10 to 12 sites. However, the absence of the Serbian Government representative since February has prevented further progress by the Commission. Discussions are under way between the Council of Europe, the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Ministry of Culture of Serbia and UNMIK to resolve the issue.

75. Over the reporting period, 34 incidents targeting heritage sites were reported. While the vast majority were vandalism (10 cases) or theft-related (20 cases), one serious incident occurred when the Dečan/Dečani monastery sustained slight damage from a rocket-propelled grenade attack on the site.

76. The Provisional Institutions, in coordination with the Serbian Orthodox Church and with support from UNMIK and the Council of Europe, have drawn up a project proposal to hire 24-hour guards and/or install surveillance equipment at 15 sites considered vulnerable. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports is preparing to allocate €20,000 to €50,000 for these additional security measures.

77. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports established a group of experts to prepare drafts for the 14 sub-laws necessary to implement the cultural heritage law. At workshops held with Council of Europe experts in April and May, it was agreed to merge some provisions so that only seven sub-laws instead of 14 would be necessary. Texts for three sub-laws were finalized. A draft proposal on the composition and terms of reference of the Kosovo Cultural Heritage Council was prepared and presented to the Commission on Culture of the Kosovo Assembly for discussion.

Cultural heritage: challenges ahead

78. Full support for the work of the Reconstruction Implementation Committee is needed from all stakeholders.

79. Seven subsidiary laws necessary for the implementation of the law on cultural heritage should be drafted and passed within the time frame allotted in the law. A non-discriminatory policy for the allocation of funding for cultural heritage protection should be defined in subsidiary legislation. The Kosovo Cultural Heritage Council should be in place by the end of June 2007.

80. The Provisional Institutions should continue to work on ways to ensure adequate protection of cultural heritage sites, such as increased security measures, condemnation of violent acts perpetrated against them and positive reinforcement messages raising awareness of the value of cultural heritage.

81. Following the establishment of a new Government in Serbia, the Belgrade-Prishtinë/Priština cultural dialogue needs to be re-energized.

Dialogue

82. Three of the four working groups of the direct dialogue between Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade on technical issues were inactive during the reporting period.

83. The Missing Persons Working Group held an ad hoc session in Prishtinë/Priština in early April under the auspices of its chair, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The Prishtinë/Priština and Belgrade delegations subsequently met on 18 April in Niš, Serbia, to exchange information on a suspected mass grave site in Raška, Serbia. A conference on Kosovo missing persons issues, organized by the Sarajevo-based International Commission on Missing Persons, was held in Ohrid, in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on 16 and 17 May. It was the first opportunity for groups of Serbian and Albanian family members of the missing from the 1998-1999 conflict to meet face to face.

84. A plenary session of the Missing Persons Working Group, its first in a year, had been scheduled for 31 May in Prishtinë/Priština but was postponed after the Prishtinë/Priština delegation threatened to boycott the session if a leader of the Serbian family association of missing persons, who had participated in the 5 May inauguration of a Serbian vigilante group that intends to "liberate" Kosovo, formed part of the delegation. An ICRC proposal to substitute the individual was refused, resulting in postponement of the meeting.

Kosovo Protection Corps

85. Minority community membership in the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) slightly decreased in the reporting period and now stands at 195 (6.7 per cent), of whom 42 are Serbs (1.4 per cent). The decrease is in part due to absenteeism and subsequent dismissal, resignations and a general suspension on recruitment and promotion since 12 February. In addition, 92 members have left KPC as part of the resettlement pilot programme (see para. 88 below). Efforts are focusing on ethnic minority outreach, retention and the implementation of humanitarian projects. Kosovo Serb members remain subject to pressure from their own communities not to participate in KPC. No internal allegations of discrimination have arisen.

86. Women are represented at all levels of KPC though in comparatively small numbers (89 or 3.1 per cent).

87. Disciplinary compliance continues to improve, although further improvement in the staffing and conduct of disciplinary investigations by KPC is still required.

88. The resettlement pilot programme for the redundancy of 80 KPC personnel was launched on 23 January. An additional 12 members have since joined the programme, thus exhausting its current funding capacity. The programme consists of a nine-month resettlement package provided by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), funded by the United Kingdom, and a severance payment of the participant's remaining salary for the year 2007, taken from the KPC budget.

89. The demining capacity of KPC has increased with the completion of training for 32 new deminers. KPC is on track to assume sole responsibility for all mine and unexploded ordnance clearance in late 2007. A United States-funded project for the donation of four mine detection dog teams began on 17 April.

90. The capacity of the civil protection brigade is increasing. In the coming year its full operational capability is expected to be endorsed in search and rescue, explosive ordnance, disposal and firefighting and hazardous material protection, upon receipt of further specialist training and equipment. Its new purpose-built headquarters was officially inaugurated on 12 March.

Kosovo Protection Corps: challenges ahead

91. Despite its positive personnel policies, active engagement among Kosovo Serb communities and apparent lack of internal discrimination, KPC still has difficulty in retaining Kosovo Serbs and gaining support from this minority community.

92. Donor support is needed to repair and replace equipment to increase KPC capacity to implement humanitarian projects and respond to civil emergencies.

Annex II

**Composition and strength of the police component of the
United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
(as at 1 June 2007)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>
Argentina	9	Nepal	17
Austria	22	Netherlands	1
Bangladesh	31	Nigeria	14
Brazil	2	Norway	15
Bulgaria	52	Pakistan	174
China	18	Philippines	44
Croatia	9	Poland	122
Czech Republic	18	Portugal	4
Denmark	24	Romania	182
Egypt	16	Russian Federation	38
Finland	2	Slovenia	15
France	47	Spain	13
Germany	151	Sweden	35
Ghana	35	Switzerland	6
Greece	10	Timor-Leste	8
Hungary	12	Turkey	148
India	68	Uganda	4
Italy	29	Ukraine	189
Jordan	68	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	65
Kenya	15	United States of America	222
Kyrgyzstan	8	Zambia	7
Lithuania	6	Zimbabwe	18
Malawi	4		
Total			1 997

**Composition of the Kosovo Police Service
(as at 1 June 2007)**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>
Kosovo Albanians	83.99	6 060
Kosovo Serbs	10.31	744
Other ethnic minority members	5.70	411
Total		7 215
Men	86.44	6 237
Women	13.56	978

Annex III**Composition and strength of the military liaison component
of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in
Kosovo (as at 1 June 2007)**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of liaison officers</i>
Argentina	1
Bangladesh	1
Bolivia	1
Bulgaria	1
Chile	1
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	1
Finland	2
Hungary	1
Ireland	4
Jordan	2
Kenya	1
Malawi	1
Malaysia	1
Nepal	1
New Zealand	1
Norway	1
Pakistan	1
Poland	1
Portugal	2
Romania	3
Russian Federation	2
Spain	2
Ukraine	2
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1
Zambia	1
Total	37





Security Council

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Letter dated 29 June 2007 from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council

In connection with Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a copy of the letter dated 25 June 2007 addressed to me by the Prime Minister of the Lebanese Republic, Fouad Siniora, requesting an extension of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon beyond 31 August 2007, for a period of one year (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Ban Ki-moon**



Annex

**Letter dated 25 June 2007 from the Prime Minister of Lebanon
to the Secretary-General**

[Original: English]

I write with reference to paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), and in view of the expiry of the term of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) on 31 August 2007. I would like to convey to you the decision of the Council of Ministers on 25 June to request the extension of the said term for an additional period of one year ending on 31 August 2008, in conformity with the mandate of UNIFIL as stipulated in paragraph 11 of resolution 1701 (2006), and without amendment. The Lebanese Government is satisfied with the activity of UNIFIL and the level of cooperation with the Lebanese armed forces and looks forward to the continuation of its mandate in pursuit of peace and stability. I seize this opportunity to salute the commander, officers and soldiers of UNIFIL and their devotion to their task, and also to reiterate our thanks and appreciation to the contributing countries and their Governments for standing beside us at this important juncture in reaffirming the role of the Lebanese State and the prevalence of its sole authority over the whole of its territory.

I look forward to the favourable decision by the Security Council for the required extension at the end of August.

(Signed) Fouad Siniora